ERRATA.

THere are Literal faults and miſpointings which if the Reader's Curioſity obſerves it is hoped his Candour will pardon. Such as are moſt material may be thus amended,

PAge 28. Line 4. for *theſe* read they. p. 29. l. 10. dele and. p. 31. l. 17. for *Breath* r. Breaſt. p. 32. l. 17. for *& food ſo* r. food, and ſo. p. 36. l. 6. for *Bonds* r. Bands. p. 82. l. 3. for *Denunciation* r. Denomination. p. 95. l. ult. and penult. dele the Tautology. p. 96. l. 11. dele about. p. 100. l. ult. r. Look for. p. 109 l. 20. dele At-

ERRATA.

THere are Literal faults and miſpointings which if the Reader's Curioſity obſerves it is hoped his Candour will pardon. Such as are moſt material may be thus amended,

PAge 28. Line 4. for *theſe* read they. p. 29. l. 10. dele and. p. 31. l. 17. for *Breath* r. Breaſt. p. 32. l. 17. for *& food ſo* r. food, and ſo. p. 36. l. 6. for *Bonds* r. Bands. p. 82. l. 3. for *Denunciation* r. Denomination. p. 95. l. ult. and penult. dele the Tautology. p. 96. l. 11. dele about. p. 100. l. ult. r. Look for. p. 109 l. 20. dele At-

A

PRACTICAL

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING *THE* CHOICE BENEFIT

of *Communion* with *GOD* in His

HOUSE,

Witnessed unto by the Experience of Saints as
The best Improvement of TIME. Being the
Summe of several Sermons on *Psal.* 84. 10.
Preach'd in *Boston* on *Lecture-Dayes*

BY JOSHUA MOODY *Minister of the Gospel.*

Psal. 27. 4. One thing *have I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the* Hou[illegible] of the Lord *all the days of my life &c.*
Psal. [illegible] *To see thy power and thy glory so as* [illegible] *thee in the* Sanctuary.

[illegible]*ON IN NEW-ENGLAND*

Printed by *Richard Pierce* for *Joseph Brunning*,
And are to be sold at his Shop at the Corner
of *Prison-Lane* next the *Exchange*. 1685.

To the Reader.

Christian Reader

THe *Ensuing* Sermons *are such for the excellent* Matter *and* Usefulness *of them that they will sufficiently commend themselves to the* judicious: *It being of great and universal Concern to Rational and Intelligent Beings to be directed and helped in* Improvement *of* Time *to the* best Advantage. *The Labours of the Reverend* Authour *for the Clearing and Furthering* this *in the following* Discourses *upon that Subject [illegible] and no* Letters *of* Commendation; *He did [illegible] Commend himself to the Consciences of [illegible] the* Preaching *of them, of whom I profess my self one, and such an one who is sensible that his* Candle-light *will not further, nor Contribute any thing to the Clear and powerful Demonstrations and Evidences you will find in the*

serious Perusal of them. Yet being desired to say something, I was willing to testifie my Esteem of the Usefulness and Seasonableness *to our present Time, which not only commends* things *to us for our delightful Use* Eccles. 3. 10. *by the wise over-ruling Providence of God, but* Instruments *too, as fitted for* Ministerial work *Isa.* 50. 4.

The great Evil that is most provoking to God among a professing People *(especially* sincere Christians*) even the root-evil whence all other do issue is that which Christ charges upon the Church of* Ephesus *Rev.* 2. 5. the want of first-Love. *The true Converts have not a defect of a principle of Love, which may distinguish them from the most specious* Hypocrites; *yet may not be so warm and fervent as in their first union to Christ, and Communion with God in their Pardon and Holiness. This is more offensive to* Jesus Christ *in true Saints than the open out-breakings of those that are profane sinners, and for which he threatens* Removing the Candlestick *if his Warning and Advice be not attended.*

What can be more suitable then such [redacted]*, whose Tendency is to further us in our C*[redacted] *with the mind of Christ to such a people* [redacted] *and our condition is so like,* non ovum ovo simi-lius. *As,*

1. *To put us in mind* whence we are fallen. *It*

To the Reader.

It is Communion with God in his Ordinances *that makes Time there ſo valuable above all other* 2. Pet. 3. 8. *This* one thing *is* that *the Apoſtle would not have us ignorant of viz. that* one day with God is as a Thouſand years, & a 1000 years as one day: *It is true there he Speaks of Gods Eternity which is not meaſured by Time, nor is any Time conſiderable with it; yet it may be improved with reſpect to Believers being with God, here is ſuch an immenſe and univerſal good that we have more true ſoul-pleaſure with God himſelf in an* Hour, *than if we had the quinteſſence of Created Good* all our Dayes, *therein we are truly happy, it is our* Heaven upon Earth. *But if theſe be Ordinary dayes and under common Eſteem with us, that we go not to his Houſe to enjoy God as our* Exceeding Joy, *we have loſt our Communion with God (and ſo far our Happineſs) that we are herein like* other *men.*

2. *If this were practically remembered, it might have its influence to promove our Repentance in bewailing thoſe ſins and that bitterly that have caſt our Beloved to with-draw. It is not that Ordinances are not as precious in* themſelves *as they have been to us and other Saints, nor is it that they are not as ſuitable meanes to convey thoſe Bleſſings, nor is it want of kindneſs and love in God and Jeſus Chriſt who have the ſame de-*

delight in *and deſire* of *Communion with Believers; and the deſign of his Grace* in *us, and his Ordinances* to *us is that he might enjoy us, but our* carnally-ſecure *Hearts in with-drawing from him have provoked him to with-draw from us* Cant. 5. 2, —6. *It began in our low eſteem of Chriſt & his Fellowſhip, bemoan it heartily and labour to recover it.*

If this be alſo attended with ſuitable Reformation *in* a *diligent Frequenting the* HOUSE of God, *and preſſing after Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son (the great deſign of Ordinances) and that we will not be ſatisfied without Him, then ſhall we again have our* beſt dayes *returned to us. All theſe may be furthered by our diligent Peruſal of the* Sermons here preſented us, *that ſhew what the benefit is that Saints do experience in Ordinances ſo improved.*

That it may be accompanied to thee in reading *with the gracious preſence of the Holy Spirit that breathed in its* Delivery, *for ends fore-mentioned, that ſo the joy of* his *Salvation may be reſtored, and* Houſe of God *continued to us, is my earneſt Prayer, to which I deſire thy AMEN, who am*

thy ſoul's well-wiſher

JAMES ALLEN.

Pſal. 84. 10.

For a day in thy Courts is better than a Thouſand: -----

AFter the many Anxious Enquiries and Debates about the *Summum Bonum*, or *Chiefeſt Good* of the rational Creature, in more Ancient and darker Times; It hath been at length, by Him that brought Life and Immortality to light, clearly evinced, and among Chriſtians put beyond diſpute, that *This is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* Joh. 17. 3. Hence in all Ages thoſe with whom this Doctrine hath effectually obtained, have held themſelves obliged highly to prize, and conſcientiouſly, conſtantly and carefully to attend upon all thoſe wales that have been recommended to

them by the Stamp of Divine Inſtitution, as meanes of growing in the knowledge *of*, or getting, maintaining, and encreaſing their Communion *with* this God in Chriſt, whom they do value as their Happineſs. And for this very reaſon it is that all pious ſouls have ever had ſo venerable an Eſteem of the Houſe of God, and the Ordinances or Inſtituted Worſhip thereof, as wayes and Meanes appointed unto the End propoſed: which by their Encomiums *of*, Joyfulneſs *in*, and Thankfulneſs *for* while they have had the liberty of enjoying the ſame, together with vehement Pantings, and inſatiable Longings-after (when bereaved of them) they have plentifully diſcovered. Inſomuch that true Love, and hearty unfeigned Devotion towards the Houſe of God has been look'd at as a Mark of Sincerity where it hath been found. Thus *David* when making his appeal to God about his Integrity *Pſal.* 26. 8. brings this for one Argument, viz. his *Love to the habitation of His Houſe, and place where his Honour dwells.* And on the other hand the decay of love to God's Houſe appearing either in a total neglect thereof, or Slightineſs and Indifferency thereabout, among the Profeſſors of Religion hath been accounted a ſad Symptome of the decay of the power of Godlineſs, a ſign of great Degeneracy, and an Introduction of Apoſtacy; as alſo an awful Prognoſtick of great Judge-

ments

Judgments, if not ruinating Calamity haſtning on ſuch a People. This is one of the moſt bitter provocations of the Lord's Sons and Daughters when they have loſt their Affection to their Fathers houſe, and either care not to come there, or if they do, it is with ſuch coldneſs, formality and Slightineſs, and with ſo little heart and hungring after Fellowſhip with Himſelf there, that he accounts himſelf rather Mock'd than honour'd by ſuch Spiritleſs and Truthleſs Performances. this kindles ſuch a fire in his Anger that nothing but the bloud of Chriſt in a way of unfeigned Repentance and Reformation can put out.

If I miſtake not in mine Obſervation there ſeems to be a great falling ſhort in that Love and Zeal for the Worſhip of God, and that Labour and Frequency of waiting upon Him in his Houſe, both on Sabbath dayes and Lecture dayes, that hath been formerly obſerved in thoſe that have profeſſed Chriſtianity in Truth. Men do not make ſo great, or Momentous and Neceſſary a buſineſs thereof, as heretofore. A dangerous condition! both as it intimates a Decay in the very Vitals of Religion, and as it makes way for God's Anger to come upon ſuch a degenerate Generation.

Our Fathers have told us how precious the Word of God was in their dayes, and proved their high Eſteem thereof by the paines they

were wont to take in travelling many a mile to a Sermon in their own Land; as also by their Leaving *All* to follow the Lord some Thousands of Miles into a Wilderness, that they might freely Enjoy the liberties of his House, and obtain Communion with Him there.

With what an ill face then it does look, that we should flagg in our Affections *to*, and grow Cold in our Attendance *on* those high and valuable enjoyments that our Fathers purchased at so dear a Rate, I leave to the sad and serious Consideration of all thinking Christians. Sundry proffitable Lectures round about us quite laid down! And some who keep up Lectures (especially in Country-Towns, where the Arguments of a Market and other secular Business do not induce People to afford their Attendance) are ready to think whether they were not better lay them down also than preach to bare walls, or at least to such thinn Congregations.

My Aym in chooſing *this Text*, at *this Time*, and in *this Place* of general Resort is to bear my Testimony against this growing and dangerous Evil, and to endeavour the reviveing of the *first Love* and ancient Affection to the *House* and *Word* of God, as not knowing wherein I may do better service for our God, and for the People of our God, than by raising the Reputation of the *House* of *God* among us.

And the words read furniſh me with a ſuitable *Medium* unto ſuch an end, taken from the Topick of Gain and Profit that will redound unto the behoof of them that are ſerious therein. An Argument which if it be Demonſtratively urged, and God ſhall pleaſe to *ſet in* therewith, we ſhall not need doubt of ſome good Succeſs. Gain ſmells ſweet in moſt mens Noſtrils. He that baits his hook with Profit, may expect not to toyl in vain, provided it be underſtood and realized. So ſweet and allureing a ſound does Gain make, that he who can *harp well upon* that *ſtring* may hope for an attentive Auditory. Therefore doth the Lord bait the net of his Goſpel which he lets down in his Houſe with a promiſe of a great Reward unto all that ſhall be drawn thereinto. Would men be convinced that there is no way of ſpending Time ſo much to advantage as in the Houſe of God, it is to be hoped that the end would be anſwered. When matter of Gain was diſcourſed by *Demetrius* and the Craftsmen on the one hand, and Danger of Loſing their Religion (tho' indeed it was no Religion) on the other hand (*Act.* 19. 34.) it drew the whole City together, and made them continue for two houres ſpace in one conſtant Cry to proclaim their Devotion toward *Diana* of the *Epheſians*. Mee-thinks the greater Gain to be gotten by waiting on God

in his Houſe, with the danger of loſing our Religion (which by the neglect of that duty is eminently endangered,) ſhould have a greater Influence, and oblige us to attendance, and that with all Seriouſneſs and Joyfulneſs. Why ſhould not the whole City come together, and ſpend the two hours allotted for this Exerciſe in the Worſhip of the true God, with as great readineſs and as little wearineſs as they did in the ſervice of an Idol?

There needs not much to be ſaid to the Context in order to the clearing of the Text. Briefly, the Pſalm ſeems plainly to have a Reference to ſome Time wherein the *Pſalmiſt* was deprived of the Liberties of Gods Houſe, which he looks at as a ſore Affliction, and does very Pathetically and feelingly bewail the ſame, adding vehement Soul-longings, even unto fainting, with reiterated and ſundry wayes enforced Supplications that he might be repoſſeſs'd of thoſe (at preſent loſt) Priviledges.

Take the Text as related to the Context and it Contains one Reaſon of the above-mentioned Longings and Cryings after the Houſe of God, *viz.* becauſe he ſaw it to be a place far more for his advantage to dwell in, it was by many degrees better being there than elſwhere. And there to be where it is beſt to be, ſhould be every mans deſire.

Take the words ſeperatly conſidered in themſelvs

and they are a compariſon between a Day ſpent in the Courts of God's Houſe, and elſwhere; and the preference is given to a day there, and that by the difference of a Thouſand to One.

A Day in thy Courts is better than a Thouſand,] Or it may be read *A Day is good in thy Courts above a Thouſand.* The Comparative degree [*better*] being ſo rendered *good before.* Or I know not why it may not be as well read [*A good day in thy Courts is before a Thouſand.*] The Houſe of God is a good place, and all our dayes *there* are good daies in themſelves, and its our own fault if they be not ſo to us.

But I ſhall not Criticiſe upon it, the ſenſe comes all to one.

A day] and by like reaſon a *part* of a day when we ſpend not the whole day there; there being no Neceſſity of taking [*Day*] here for a day in propriety of ſpeech, either natural or Artificial: But it may intend any part or portion of Time, leſs or more that is appointed for that Imployment.

In thy Courts] A Court is a place or ſpace of Ground, more peculiarly impropriated and belonging to the uſe of an Houſe, ſequeſtred or diſtinguiſhed from that which lies in Common, and through which we have admittance to the Houſe. Take it as referring and belonging to the *Temple*, and then it intends

that place adjoyning to the ſame, into which the people might come to worſhip God, and to hear his Word read and expounded, and ſo the Court by a *Metonymie* may be put for the Worſhip there performed, and the Fellowſhip with God there obtained. So that when *David* ſpeaks of his *faintings for God's Courts*, and his *longings to be there*, he intends to intimate his great Affection *for*, and deſire *after* drawing near to God in the Publique Inſtituted Worſhip of his Houſe, from which he was now baniſhed. And as their Temple-Worſhip was a Type of our *Goſpel Worſhip*; So to us it may ſignifie (and we may improve the whole Pſalm so teach us) the worth and glory of the Worſhip of God in his Houſe, how it is to be valued or eſteemed by us.

Better than a Thouſand] *i. e.* abundantly better, many degrees better, a certain number being put here for an Uncertain, and it is to ſhew that there is a Vaſt and Inexpreſſible Difference between them, and that the Preference is by many degrees to be given to the Houſe of God: and that there is no Compariſon between ſpending of time there and elſewhere. He inſtanceth in a Thouſand, and yet tells us that does not reach it, for *one day* there *is beter than a Thouſand*, and if you ſhould Add a Thouſand more, it would ſtill hold true.

The

The Words then contain this Doctrinal Conclusion, *viz.*

Doct. *That it is an exceeding profitable way of spending Time, to spend it in the Publique Worship of God in his House.*

The best way by a Thousand to one of improving Time, is to Improve it in the way of Publique Instituted worship. There is more than a Thousand to one difference between Time spent in God's House, and spent any where else. Excellent is the advantage that we may make of Time by using it in the Publick Worship of God, above any other way imaginable.

Time is one of the rarest Jewels and most precious Talents, with which the Lord is betrusting us in this World, our Felicity both here and hereafter depending upon the *well-improving* of it, and man's Misery arising from hence, because he does not know his Season.

Then of excellent use must this Truth needs be, which tells us how to *husband our Time* in the best manner, so as to make it turn most to account. They that have but little Time had need enquire how they shall doe to make the most of it, why the *Doctrine* directs in that great Enquiry, Spend as much of it as you can in the House of God, Visit God at his House as oft

oft as you may, Loſe no opportunity of being with God *there*; Nothing will be ſo beneficial to you as your ſo doing.

And the Doctrine ſpeaks of Publick Worſhip in God's Houſe, for it is that which the Text and Context intend.

For the proof of this Aſſertion, there needs the leſs to be ſaid, becauſe it is ſo plainly and poſitively affirmed in the Text, being Commended to our belief not only by the Teſtimony of *David*, (a man ſo able to judge of the worth of a day in God's Houſe, unto which both by the Enjoyment and Want thereof he had been advantaged,) but alſo coming to us with the *ſtamp* of Divine Authority upon it. The Spirit of God in *David* gives this Price of a *Day in Gods Houſe*, and therefore we may take it ſo, and be aſſured it is not overprized.

Yet becauſe it is ſo little practically believed it may not be amiſs to ſpend ſome Time in the Demonſtrating thereof.

Now the Text ſaith that *a day ſpent in the Houſe of God, is better than a Thouſand dayes*, it doth not ſay *where*, or *how ſpent*, but leaves it indefinitely, and may be underſtood of ſo many dayes ſpent any where elſe that we may imagine; and we ſhall find that Time ſpent in the Houſe of God is better than any other where.

We may therefore illuſtrate and prove this Truth

Truth by conſidering the various wayes of Spending Time, and comparing the advantage gained by being in the Houſe of God, above what is to be gotten otherwhere, the difference will appear, and the Preference be found where the Doctrine places it.

Time is ſpent either in Idleneſs or Action, in doing *Nothing* (if at leaſt it be poſſible for a man at any time not to doe ſomething, as in a ſenſe it is) or *Something*.

1. Then, *To ſpend Time in the Houſe of God is a Thouſand times better than to ſpend it in Idleneſs*; For of Idleneſs comes no goodneſs. *In all Labour there is profit, but the talk of the lips tendeth only to Poverty.* Prov. 14. 23. And I fear many an hour that ſhould be ſpent in God's Houſe is ſpent ſo. He that is doing nothing, is getting nothing; for *of nothing comes nothing*. If Conſcience tell thee thou haſt been ſtanding Idle in the Market place, or doing nothing in thine own houſe or elſe-where, thou hadſt a Thouſand times better been at a Sermon, for there thou might'ſt have done & gotten ſomething. A day in the Houſe of God [illegible] ſand times better than doing (and ſo getting) nothing, there being no Compariſon between ſomething and nothing. Tho alſo it is worſe than ſo, becauſe it is a ſin to be Idle, Yea and a moſt pernicious and ruinating evil [illegible]

which expoſes men to Tentation, and is the occaſion of any thing that is ſinful. *Idleneſs was one of the ſins of Sodom* (Ezek. 16. 49.)

2 *If men are doing ſomething and not utterly idle, yet if not well employed, it's a Thouſand times better to be in the Houſe of God.* They may not be Sleeping, Idleing, Sitting ſtill, but very buſie, and yet if not a doing good, but evil, the dreadful wages that will ſurely be paid to ſuch in the iſſue, will plentifully evince this Truth. Every ſinner ſhall one day *ſay, I have ſinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.* Job. 33. 27. Sin may be ſweet in the committing, but bitterneſs in the end. *Stollen waters are ſweet, ——— but — the dead are there.* (*Prov.* 9. *ult.*) Is not much of that Time which is by ſome ſpent in the Houſe of God to their great Advantage, by others elſe-where miſpent in Drinking, Carrouſing, Gameing, in Riotting and Drunkenneſs, in Chambering and Wantonneſs? And what profit will you find in theſe things when your account comes to be made up? The Apoſtle makes that Appeal to them after they were enlightened and ſanctified, (and ſo beſt able to judge *Rom.* 6. 20, 21.) *What fruit had yee while ſervants of Sin?* what wages for your ſervice? Shame and Death being the end of thoſe waies: Then you had a Thouſand times

better

better been in the House of God, seeking Glory and Life.

3 *Time spent in God's House is better than spent about any Secular Business or Worldly Concerns.* It's Lawful, yea a Duty to be diligent in your particular Callings, God hath Commanded us in the sweat of our brows to get our Bread, and enjoyned us six dayes to labour and doe all that we have to doe, and he hath promised us if we acknowledge him in our waies, to direct our pathes, to prosper us whithersoever we turn our selves, to bless our Labour in the House and Field &c. In all this our Labour there is Profit, but yet no such Profit or gain as is to be had in the House of God. Let men be in their Fields, Gardens, Orchards, in their Shops & Warehouses, let them be Labouring, Merchandizing there, and have never so many advantages before them to get by their Commodities, let them buy and sell and get gain, and as much gain as they would propose to themselves, or could wish; yet still one day in God's House is better than a Thousand thus improved. God gives greater wages for working in his House than can be gotten with all our paines and Contrivance in our own. If Farms and Merchandize interfere with your Call of the Gospel, if worldly Cares and Business prove Thorns to Choak the Word, to deaden your Affections

Affections thereto, draw away your Spirits therefrom, and hinder your fruitfulneſs under the ſame; they are to be lookt upon as Snares and Traps and Cheaters, and to be treated accordingly: But uſe theſe things how you will, with never ſo much Care and Circumſpection, ſtill your Time in the Houſe of God will be found your beſt Time.

4. I may add, that *Time is better ſpent in God's Houſe, than in Religious duties in a private way; Nor can one ſpend that Time* lawfully, *much leſs* profitably *in private devotions, which is appointed for publick Worſhip, if God gives him an opportunity of enjoying it.*

Going to the Houſe of God with the Company that keep Holy day, is far more eligible & profitable than tarrying at home tho' a man ſhould read a better Sermon in his own Houſe than he may hear in God's Houſe. Doubtleſs *David* had his waies of ſecret Communion with God while in the Wilderneſs, but he was ſo far from being ſatisfied therewithal, that thoſe Taſts he had there ſerved only to increaſe his hungerings, pantings, breathings after ſ Sanctuary, and ſeeing the Glory of God in the beauty of Holineſs, which he had ſeen there. And that is indeed one principal uſe of private Devotions, to prepare us *for*, and increaſe our deſires *after* Publique Ordinances and

and Fellowſhip with God in them. To take up with them in the Neglect of the other, is croſſe to one of their main ends, and very injurious to our ſelves.

See Gurnal's *Epiſt. Dedicat. to his Spiritual Armour. pt. 1. pag. 3.*

For the further proveing of this Doctrine, I ſhal give theſe 2 reaſons

Reaſ. 1. *Becauſe there are a Thouſand times better things to be gotten in the Houſe of God than elſ-where*; and therefore a Day *there*, is better than a Thouſand.

Reaſ. 2. *Becauſe the attending on God in his Houſe, is the only ſure way to get not only thoſe things ſo much better in value, but even thoſe other things alſo over and above, for the getting of which the Houſe of God is too frequently neglected.*

If theſe two Things be demonſtrated, the Doctrine will be abundantly evinced.

The former Reaſon or Argument may be thus framed.

That place where there are things to be ſeen and enjoyed that are a Thouſand times better than thoſe to be had elſe where, is the place in which to be one day is better than a Thouſand,

But the Houſe of God is the place where there are things to be ſeen and enjoyed that are a Thouſand times beter than thoſe that are to be had elſe-where ——— Therefore one day *there* is better than a Thouſand.

Of

Of the former.

Here be the beſt things to be ſeen and gotten; Profit, Pleaſures, Honour are the Idols that the world wonders after, that they ſacrifice their Time, Strength and ſpirits unto: Now that which is true Profit or Gain, real Honour, ſubſtantial Pleaſure is here, and here only to be had.

Here are true Riches, the Jewel of ineſtimable value, which he that gets, gets more than the whole world is worth, and this Pearl is hid in the Field of the Goſpel, incloſed within the Pale of the Courts of Gods Houſe. The product of the Toyl and travel of many a day, is only a little earth. let a man ſearch up and down the world, Compaſs Sea and Land, Ranſack the Bowels of the Earth for the hidden Treaſures that are there, Tire out himſelf in the Multitude of his way, Waſte away his Time, and wear away his ſtrength, riſe up early and go to bed late and eat the bread of Carefulneſs, and when all is done, what hath he gained? why a very ſmall portion, a poor pittance, that which is ſo far from deſerving the Name of profit that it is a meer vanity and vexation of ſpirit. *Solomon* look'd upon his Houſes, Lands, Gardens, Orchards, Men-ſervants, and Maid-ſervants, with whatever elſe he had ſpent ſo much time about in the world, and finds that there was *no profit under the Sun*;

but

but in this Market is that rich Commodity to be had which he is a wiſe Merchant who ſells all that he has to purchaſe. It is the Scope of Chriſt (*Prov.* 8.) to prevail with men to hearken to his voice, come to his Houſe, wait dayly at his Poſts, that being inſtructed by him they might be followers of him; Now becauſe he knew men would object the neceſſity of attending their worldly Buſineſs, Farmes & Merchandize &c He therefore obviates that Objection, that there was more Gain to be gotten at his houſe than in their own Farmes, more profit by hearing his voice than by tilling their Fields, plowing their Land, or by buying & ſelling, and lets them know ỹ his Revenues & Merchandize was better than choice Silver or fine Gold, that all the wealth of the world was not to be compared therewith. *ver.* 10, 11, 12. with *Chap.* 2. 13, 14, 15. It is Rational that men ſhould lay out their mony where they may have the moſt ſuitable Commodities & beſt Peniworths, then come to me (ſaith Chriſt) to my Houſe, the Goſpel-market, hear and your ſouls ſhall live, do not lay out your *mony for that which is not bread Iſa.* 55. 1, 2, *&c.*

As for Pleaſures and Delights there are none like thoſe that are to be had in God's Houſe. There is more Sweetneſs in one hour's Fellowſhip with God in his Houſe than in all the pleaſures of ſin for a whole Life-time. See what plentiful Proviſion the Lord makes

makes and invites us to there *Isa.* 25. 6. *fat and marrowed things and wine upon the lees.* No Cook dreſſes ſuch meat, no Tavern ſells ſuch drink. The Lord in his Houſe makes ſuch proviſion as abundantly exceeds what is to be found in any other, and thoſe that ſeriouſly attend there, do find abundant ſatisfaction therein. *Pſal.* 36. 8. —— And as for matter of Honour, none like that which God puts upon them who honour him, as all diligent conſcientious waiters upon him in his Houſe eminently do. It is their glory to come near him and behold his Glory, and there (as in the Context *ver.* 11.) he gives glory and that is true Honour indeed. It is the Honour and Glory of *Angels* to be waiting upon God in his upper Houſe of Glory, & of *Men* to wait upon him in his lower houſe of the viſible Church, where we may both ſee, ſpeak of and partake in his Glory. To be admitted unto near approaches to God in his Houſe is a greater Honour & dignity than to be admitted to ſtand *before* & converſe *with* the greateſt Potentates upon earth. If men account themſelvs much honour'd by the Company of great men, much more Honour is it to be in the *Company* and dwell in the *Houſe* of the Great God.

And that which commends the good things of God's Houſe to us above all other, is that they are ſoul-Bleſſings, ſoul-profit, ſoul-plea-

ſures

pleasure &c. Now as much as the Soul is better than all the world, so much does soul-profit exceed all other profits whatsoever; A little soul-good is infinitly better than a great deal of worldly good, and consequently soul-loss is the worst loss. Suppose you should gain a little worldly profit or pleasure while you might have been at a Sermon, yet you lose soul-profit & pleasure y while, & then your loss exceeds your gain. Suppose you should be filling your purse by the one, you are thinning your souls by the other; you get bodily refreshment, comfort &c but you lose soul-benefit, and souls-pining will not be recompensed by your estates-thriveing. *Isa.* 55. 3. *hear and your souls* shall *live*; work, toyl, labour, and your bodies *may* live (tho' possibly they mayn't neither) but hear and your souls *shall* certainly, assuredly, everlastingly live. If men would but consider that they have souls, and thereupon study the worth of them til they find the preference of their souls to their bodies, they would then prefer soul-enrichments in God's House above all worldly profit or pleasure in their own, but while men are carnal sensual and bruitish, minding only their bodies, and those things that do concern their bodies, this Argument will neither be understood by them nor be prevalent with them.

Oh pray the Father of spirits, the God that

hath made us theſe ſouls, that he would alſo make us to know what our ſouls be, and what is the Concernment of our ſouls, above all other Conſiderations in the world, & then we ſhould realize that the enlightning of the ſoul, converting of the ſoul, reſtoring of the ſoul, Satisfying the hungerings and thirſtings of the ſoul, ſtrengthening us with ſtrength in our ſoul, communion with the dearly beloved of our ſouls, and making our ſouls to rejoyce in Him, the univerſal proſperity of our ſouls, and Salvation of our ſouls at laſt, all which good things are to be attained in God's Houſe, are the Beſt of all bleſſings and conſequently the attending on God there the moſt profitable and delightful of all duties, and by many Thouſand degrees eligible before all other Imployment whatſoever.

More particularly theſe that follow are ſome of thoſe things to be gotten in the Houſe of God that are a Thouſand times better than what are to be had elſe where. *e. g.*

1. Here is the word of God, the powerful enlightening, converting, ſanctifying, ſaving word of God to be heard, and the efficacy of it to be felt and experienced, the Word preached *which is the wiſdome of God and the power of God to ſalvation. Rom.* 1. 16. 1. *Cor.* 1. 18. 24. The Word by which blind eies are enlightened, deaf ears opened, dead ſouls

quickened

quickned, unconverted ones converted, unbelievers brought to the Faith of Christ, *Act.* 20. 28. Dayes of being in the House of God are dayes of power, in which God is wont by his Word to speak to the Hearts of poor needy waiters upon him, and makes sinners a willing people, *Psal.* 110. 3. Here *David* met with that Word which was more worth to him than Thousands of silver and Gold, and more sweet than the Honey and the Honey-comb. *Psal.* 19. 10. with 119. 103. He that brings his Heart (not his body only, as many do) to the House of God, and laies it under the droppings of God's Word there, he by so doing laies himself in the way of Light and Life, and puts his soul under the Influence of an Ordinance appointed by God for the conveying of all spiritual good to him, it being the Lord's way to do all by his Word. If any of you come to the House of God on a Sabbath day, and there God meet with you and bring your souls within the Net of the Gospel and save you, then you will say it was the best way of spending Time that ever you met with. If the Lord shall please to draw you off from your worldly Occasions and allure you into his House upon a Lecture-day, and there speak to your Hearts, and by his Spirit work upon you for your souls everlasting Good, you will then be so many living Monuments of the Truth of

this *Doctrine*, you will have the Witness in your selves and be able to set your seals to the experienced verity thereof.

2. Here is the best Company to be had, and such as is a Thousand Times better than what you will meet with else where. And Company is a very attracting thing; for the sake of *good-fellowship* (falsly so called) is many an hour and many a good day in God's House lost, whereas here is that which is truly and deservedly called *Good-fellowship*. Here *God Father Son* and *Spirit* are to be seen and Conversed with, the Vision of and Fellowship with God are the great things here to be enjoyed. Its true, God may be seen and conversed with elsewhere, but not in that manner and measure as here, nor at all savingly by those that may, but will not wait upon him here. They have seen his goings in the Sanctuary *Psal.* 68. 24. and so may we, the sight of that Beauty which *David* there desired *Psal.* 27. 4. is free for us also. This is eminently a Place of drawing near to God, and if you engage your hearts to draw near to him there, he will there meet you and bless you *Exod.* 20. 24. Now if you can fare so well in the House of God as to get a sight of him, a good look from him, you will account that Time spent unto unparallel'd Advantage. The beholding of God's Beauty (not gazeing on other vain beauties as too many usually do) ought to

to be our errand hither, and will be an heart-ravishing and transforming sight, and so a blessed sight indeed. Here may you see the Beauty of *Jehovah*, the manifold and matchless Beauty of the *LORD*, *the beauty of his holiness*, this is to be seen in his House which is the Habitation of his Holiness. The Grace, Mercy, Wisdom, Power, Love, and Faithfulness of God are all of them most beautiful things, and these are here to be seen. To see the Lord smiling upon a poor Creature and lifting up the Light of his Countenance over him. Oh how beautiful! Why this is eminently to be seen in his House, Temple-loving kindness worth seeing, and worth thinking on *Psal.* 48. 9.

Especially here is the *Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* to be seen 2. *Cor.* 4. 6. and be sure Christ has a very beautiful face, He is altogether Lovely and every part of him excellent *Cant.* 5. 10, 16. and in all his Beauty doth he appear in his House, and there is but this one place where he delights in such a glorious manner and in such a measure to shew himself. Something of God's Glory and Beautie does appear in the works of Creation and Providence *Rom.* 1. 20. but above all doth he unveil his Glory in Jesus Christ and in that great work of Redemption wrought out by him, in the other we may see his Footsteps,

but in this his Face, and this is a sight to be seen at his House. This glorious, beautiful Draught of the great work of Redemption is hung up in his house, his Presence-Chamber, & exposed to the veiw of all comers. Here may you see all the Attributes of God concurring & co-operating in the Contriveing & bringing about man's Salvation through a Redeemer; The Mystery of God manifested in the Flesh which the Angels *stoop down* to look into (as the *Greek* word imports 1. *Pet.* 1. 12.) And this manifold Wisdome of God in Jesus Christ is made manifest unto Principalities and Powers by the Church *Ephes.* 3. 10, 11, there they see it, thence they learn it.

There be two Seasons when especially men desire to be and appear to be beautiful, and do therefore set forth themselves accordingly *viz.* in their *wooing Time*, and on their Espousal or *Marriage day*; So it is with Jesus Christ: Lords Dayes and Lecture-dayes, when the *Gospel* is publickly preached, are Christs *wooing dayes* and therefore doth he then deck and array himself with all his *Glory* and *Beauty* that he may allure and prevail with men to have him, that being ravish'd with his Beauty they may consent to his motion. And Sacrament-dayes are more eminently the dayes of his *Espousals* wherein the Covenant that was before secretly made between Christ and the Soul when

when there was a mutual Consent and promise past'd between them, is now more solemnly Renewed Sealed and Confirmed: Now as a Bride cannot forget her Attire, no more will this great Bride-groom of our Souls neither. This therefore makes *being in the Lords House* so much better than *being elsewhere*, because there is Christ thus to be seen: And a far greater sight it is than that which (tho' great) was but a shaddow of this *Cant.* 3. 11. viz. King *Solomon* in the day of his Espousals, a greater than *Solomon* being here. On those *Festival dayes* doth the Lord Jesus put on all the Robes of his Grace, Love, Righteousness, Meekness &c that he may appear in some measure as he is among them. He puts on his red Garments, comes in his Blood and Wounds, shews the scars of his Combate with the Enemies of our Salvation, which tho' heart-breaking sights too, yet in these are his Love and Good-will to his people gloriously discovered. Thus their eies are blessed with beholding the King in his Beauty *Isa.* 33. 17. To see a Church of Christ assembled together in the exercise of the Ordinances of his House in their Temple-Robes, Sanctuary-dress, [illegible] ments, regular and exact in their [illegible] according to the Order of his House [illegible] is far above the Order of *Solomon* [illegible]

that help'd to ravish the Queen of *Sheba* 1. *King.* 10. 4, 5.) And further, to see Christ come in among them according to his promise in the Riches of his glorious Grace manifesting himself to them; I say to see this, is to see the most Glorious sight on this side of Heaven, yea it is Heaven it self, tho' Heaven upon earth. Hence it is that Sion is said to be beautiful *Psal.* 48. 2. yea and the *Perfection of beauty* Psal. 50. 2. And we may thank our selves if when ever we come to the House of God we do not see these matchless Sights, for Jesus Christ has promised his Disciples *Mat.* 28. 20. to be alwaies with them while preaching, and Consequently with those that are hearing, In the midst of those that are gathered together in his Name. In the Ordinances of God's House doth he bring us to Jesus, and to the *blood of sprinkling*, one drop of which if it light on thee there, if being called thither thou have Communion with Christ there, no created good can match it. Here also the Spirit of Christ is present who lists to be bearing witness to his own Ordinances, here you may meet with him speaking *to you* and *in you*, and helping of you, here you may experience the enlightening, teaching, quickening, sanctifying and comforting presence of the Spirit of Christ. And he that sees and converses with God in Christ in his House, he sees and enjoyes

even

even all that is worth seeing and enjoying, he may say to his soul, *Return to thy rest ------ for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee* Psal. 116, 7. This is such a filling Comprehensive enjoyment that it leaves no room for any thing else. When Christ was disposed to make an eminent discovery of his Glory unto meet witnesses who might afterward give Testimony to the world of what they had seen, he chose *Peter* (who had made such a Confession of him and was to suffer such great things for him) and *James* (who was the first of the Apostles that that we read of that laid down his life for Christ *Act.* 12. 1.) and *John* the beloved Disciple, who was to Live long and do much service for him, and was favoured with this Vision as a special evidence of his Love to him) I say he took these three and brought them up into the Mount and was transfigured before them *Matt.* 17. 1, 4. upon the sight of which Excellent glory (as he calls it 2. *Pet.* 1. 17.) they presently cry out *it's good being here*, and they might have said (for they meant as much) *it's a Thousand times better being here than elsewhere, here let us dwell* -- (the very Language of *David* in *Psalm* 27. 4.) They never concerned themselves about what they should eat or drink or where-with they should be clothed, had forgotten all their secular business & enjoyments, their Company and Comforts, their Friends

and

& Families, nay they took no care for so much as a place where to lay there Heads, did not once speak of a Tabernacle for themselves, only for Christ and each of the glorious company these would build a Tabernacle, and as for themselves they accounted Christ meat and drink and Tabernacle too, so were they transported and filled with that ineffable *Glory* of Christ who is all in all. Thus in the Mountain of the House of God doth the Lord Jesus reveal and Communicate himself as the soul-satisfying, all-filling Good. Hence in the close of that *Psalm* where you have a Record of the Glorious things spoken of in God's House *Psal.* 87. 8. there is this *Epiphonema* added [*All my springs are in thee*] They are either the words of the Spirit of God speaking in his own Name, to shew us that in his House are *lay'd up* and in the Word and Ordinances of the same are *held forth* and conveyed the waters of Life, all the springs of *Grace*, *Peace*, *Comfort*, yea of all *Good* whatsoever are there to be had, *All* is there, Or they are the words of a gracious Heart spoken by the same Spirit implying thus much, that all the springs of his Edification and Consolation as well as of his Regeneration are there; Or that he hath no *Gift* or *Grace*, *Joy* or *Comfort* or any *Good* worthy of his notice or mention save what he has there, and are conveyed to him from thence. Other men have other Comforts, and in other wayes, they have

other Cisterns and Wells (I cannot call them springs, at least not living springs because they *often* fail & will *utterly* fail in their greatest need) but *here* the sincere believing soul finds all his Springs, & such as yield him all desireable Good.

Of this same spirit was devout old *Simeon Luk.* 2. 25, 30. who when by the Spirit's conduct he was brought to the Temple and there met with Jesus Christ, he took him in his Arms and and blest God and said *now — let me depart in peace &c.* As if he had said with *Jacob* when he heard of Joseph, *It is enough*, now let me die, I am satisfied, farewell vain world with all the seeming splendor and pretended glory of the same, let me now close mine eies, after this sight I care for nothing else, nor is there any other object that I can now be willing to lend so much as a look unto, this *Glory of the people Israel* (as he calls him *ver.* 32.) hath eclipsed the lustre and stained the beauty of all other glory, I am abundantly replenished with this Sight, so that my full soul loathes all other sweets whatsoever, the whole world, yea & life it self is now *nothing* to me, let me now go immediatly to the place of perfect *Vision* & *Fruition*, where I shall everlastingly & uninterruptedly be satisfied with his likeness.

Here also may you enjoy the *Communion of Saints Psa.* 122. 4. and you will meet with no such Company else where.

Thirdly

3. Here is Grace to be gotten, first-Grace, after-Grace, more Grace, renewed Grace, restoring Grace, all manner of Grace, and such measure thereof as the Lord hath in his Infinite Wisdom and Counsel appointed the Subjects of *Grace* to attain to. The Ordinances of this House of God are ordained and blessed by him both for the gathering in or bringing home of the Elect, and also for the perfecting of the Saints and edifying the mystical body of Christ *Ephes.* 4. 12, 13.

Here Faith is infused by the word of Faith (*precious Faith* as it is called 2. *Pet.* 1. 1.) & by the same meanes nourished, strengthened, and increased; the like we might say of Love, Hope, and the rest. Now *Grace* is the best good, one drop of *Grace* better than an Ocean of Wealth, and consequently a day where *Grace* is going, better than a Thousand dayes in the Midst of the Confluence of all other Good things.

Here are those born that are new-born *Psal.* 87. 5. *Jerusalem* is called the Mother *Gal.* 4. 26. and there God doth the part of a Father to beget souls to Himself; there the Spirit (who breathes where it lists) lists to breathe unto Regeneration *Joh.* 3. 5, 8. and the place of a man's New-birth is to be preferred before the place of his Birth: men naturally love their Native Soyl, but much more doth the spiritual man

man affect & delight in the place and meanes of his Converſion. God values the *Gates of Sion* beyond all Compariſon more than he doth any or all other places, (See *Pſal.* 76. 2. with 87. 2. & 132. 12, 13.) and not without juſt cauſe; it being dignified with his *Preſence*, beautified with his *Grace*; and filled with his *Glory* above all other places. Now the Saints bearing the Image of their Heavenly Father by whom they are *there* of his own Will by the word of his Truth begotten *Jam.* 1. 18. have like Affection *for* and ſet like price *upon* the ſame.

And being begotten here they are maintained here alſo. All the good of the world is no better than Huſks to the *Prodigal*, Soul-bread is only to be had in the Father's houſe. As the Breaſt is the life of the new born child, and by a natural Inſtinct he hunts and winds and cries after it; ſo Word and Ordinances in God's Houſe are the nouriſhment, the food, the life of the New Creature, which he therefore prizes and deſires after 1. *Pet.* 2. 2, ſets his Heart unto, and deſervedly becauſe they are his very life *Deut* 23. 47. And indeed could we but realize that the Word of God is (as moſt certainly it is) our Life, we need no other conviction of the worth of it above all other things, & conſequently that being in the Houſe of God where that is deſpenſed is many a Thouſand times better and more advanta-

gious

advantagious than to be any where else. The world finds us variety of Business & Avocations, but if the Word preached be seen to be of such Concernment, we have a ready Answer to to give, here is this and that *may* be done, but we *must* live, Life is better than food and raiment and Estates. Tell an hungry or a thirsty man that's ready to perish never so many fair stories, set off with the highest *Rhetorical* flourishes, embellished with oratorical Elegancies, & sweetned with the most pleasing strains of Wit, play him a fitt of Musick, sing him the most pleasant song you can think of, hee'll tell you the Belly has no eares, all this is not meat, I must eat and drink or dye. The right understanding of the worth of God's Word in his House as it is our appointed & food to our life, would make us deaf to all the *Syren*-songs that the world or the Devil the prince of it could sing us, whose design is only to delude and destroy us, we should despise and with indignation turn away from that business that would draw us away from a Sermon. *I am born* would the New Creature say *and I must be kept*, I must have food or I cannot live, much less grow, and I must do both, or never be everlastingly Saved, and in my Father's House is my appointed food prepared for me, and thither must I goe that I may feed and live. And hence this is the Return he makes to any petty

petty inconſiderable matters that would take him off from this (and all other ſecular Affairs are but little things and inconſiderable matters, compared with this) I am going about a great work, about a matter that concerns my life, and that is and muſt be the Ruleing matter with me, unto which all other things muſt be ſubordinate and give place.

Had it not been a Birth-right (which was of a ſpiritual nature, and preferible to Life it ſelf) or ſomewhat of like ſort, and had the Caſe been indeed ſo that he muſt have purchaſed that portion of food or immediatly have died without any Remedy, *Eſau* would not have been counted a prophane perſon or a fool for letting it go for a meſs of Pottage, that being univerſally owned *Skin for skin, yea all that man hath will he give for his life, The life being more than meat, and the body — than raiment. Job.* 2. 4. with *Luk.* 12. 23. But juſtly will they be accounted fools that for the ſake of Food and Raiment or that which is of far leſs importance *part with* or *ſlight* that which is their *Life.*

4. Here are all the Benefits of Chriſt held forth, the rich Wares not to be match'd in all the world freely tender'd in this Goſpel-market, here is *Wine and milk without mony and without price Iſa.* 55. 1. Here is Pardon, Peace, Reconciliation, Adoption and Sanctifi-

Sanctification, *Christ made of God to us wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption* 1. *Cor.* 1. 30. Such Commodities as your Ships bring not home, nor are your Shops furnished with. The Sea saith of these things they are not in me, the Earth saith they are not in me *Job.* 28. 14, 19. You may with much hazzard and difficulty go down to the Sea, and dig down into the earth and yet meet with none of these things. That Peace is here preached which all your Estates cannot purchase, that Peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

5. I may add this further that is to be gotten in the House of God *viz.* a satisfactory Resolution of those Enquiries, an Answer to those Doubts and Scruples which pious, serious, thinking souls are often exercised and puzzled with, but by waiting upon God in his House are enlightned and relieved. Hence *David* renders this as one of the reasons why he made Dwelling in the House of God his *one thing* viz. because he accounted it a good Enquiring-place *Psal.* 27. 4. besides that *there* was the Lords Beauty to be seen, *there* also was a place for enquiring. A child of God is the most inquisitive Creature in the world, something he has seen, but withal he sees that there is a great deal more that he hath not seen, and hence is for enquiring. Persons that are studying for Knowledge

Knowledge meet with many queſtions that they cannot anſwer, many Riddles, Knots, Difficulties, that they cannot underſtand, untye, ſee through, and therefore chuſe to live near ſuch perſons to whom they may repair for Information. Hence young beginners are trained up in Schools under experienced, knowing Teachers, by whom they may be inſtructed as there is occaſion. Now the Houſe of God is the ſchool where the Lord trains up all his Children, there he teacheth them what they know not, and reſolves them in what they are at a ſtand about. More than a few are the Reaſonings that a Believer hath in himſelf, he lives and walks in the midſt of a multitude of Thoughts (eſpecially at ſometimes, as *Pſal.* 94. 19.) hath many ſcruples in his mind, ſpends many a ſolitary hour in inward doubtings and arguings *pro and con*, and comes often to an Ordinance with his head full of enquiries, and his Heart full of care and fear thereabout; but when he comes to the Houſe of God (and thither he goes to enquire) he is there ſatisfied, God ſuits a word to his Caſe, orders an Anſwer to that queſtion which he had been long poreing upon to little purpoſe, ſpeakes to the ſecrets of his Heart, clears up his doubts and quiets his Spirit; An notable inſtance whereof we find in *Pſal.* 73. 17. the Pſalmiſt there had been wofully

plunged and dangerously foiled, insomuch that he was almost gone, was ready to repent him of all his Religion, and that from the Prosperity of the wicked whom he saw spared, enriched, free from Troubles in their lives and Bonds in their Death, while himself (tho' he had cleansed his Heart and washed his hands in Innocency) was plagued all the day long and chastened every morning; Now about this he was at an utter loss, could not unriddle this Mystery of Providence, it proved a work too hard for him, to the Sanctuary therefore he goes, & attending upon God there, met with that which answered & settled him. There he learnt *that no man knows love or hatred by all that is before him.* Eccles. 9. 1. There he understood that God might out of his absolute Soveraignty, and for other Reasons best known to himself both outwardly prosper the worst, and sorely afflict the best of men, a Truth which probably he had the notional Knowledge of before but had it not born in upon his Heart with particular application to the present Case unto his Satisfaction and Comfort till he came into the Sanctuary. Those that *have Christ formed in them* are often exercised with the like strugglings within them as *Rebekah* had *Gen.* 25. 21, 22, 23. insomuch that they are ready to say, if it be so, why am I thus?

abrupt

abrupt expreſſions importing Anxiety and perturbation; But the Word cleares up the matter by telling them that there are two men in every new Man, and thoſe painful plunges ſhall have a comfortable iſſue in the end. By enquiring of God *ſhe* got her Anſwer, and ſo may *we*, and the beſt place for Enquireing is the Houſe of God. Satan cannot make more doubts, the Old-man raiſe more ſtorms, the unbelieving Heart cauſe more perplexities than the Lord in his Houſe can anſwer, allay, and extricate out of, and the experience of troubled ſouls will teſtifie that he is wont ſo to doe, without which there would be no carying on with Comfort.

In ſumme then, as much as God is more worth than the Creature, Chriſt than the world, Grace than Gold, Pearls than Pebles, Spirituals than Temporals, Wiſdom and its Merchandize than all the Traffick on the Earth, as much as Heaven is more worth than Vanity, and the Houſe of God which is an Inlet into Heaven exceeds any thing, all-things that this World can produce or afford; ſo much is a day ſpent there in and about theſe more Excellent Things to be rated above a day improved on any other Account, and ſo the Aſſertion is proved that *One Day in the Houſe of God is better than a Thouſand.*

To conlude this Argument, I shall a little further enforce and illustrate it by making this three-fold Appeal,

1. To those that have been and are negligent in giving their attendance in the House of God, cannot spare the Time from their worldly occasions, some keep open their shops at Lecture-time, others come into Town & make their market in the morning and away again before the Sermon, others walk the streets, sit in Taverns or stay in their own Houses while the Sermon is Preaching, and I would ask you what do you gain? what profit do you make of this two Hours Time in a week thus saved from the Publick Worship of God, ask your selves seriously and answer truly what is your gain? how much does it amount to in a day's nay in a year's Time? why one takes a few pence in his shop, another earns a few by a small Jobb of work done the while, another redeems an hour or two from a sermon and gets so much the sooner about his occasions at home, another gets a little ease, a little sleep, a little drink, and idle, vain Chatt together with it, and I beseech you what does it come to? what is your estate advanced or your selves any way bettered at the years end? Nay are you not losers every manner of way? Did they who neglected God's House whom the Prophet *Haggai* reproves *Chapt.* 1. gain any

Thing

Thing by their labour in or about their own houſes, or in their Fields while plowing ſowing or gathering in? No they were curſed in their Employment, blaſted in their Labours, the Lord did blow upon their Harveſt and the wages they earned was put in a bag with Holes, all that they did turned to little or no Account, nothing ſucceeded with them. God is the ſame and the Concerns of his Houſe of as great value as ever, and his Anger as hot *now* for ſlighting and neglecting his Ordinances as *then*; ſo that could you take an exact account you'd ſee cauſe to own your ſelves loſers even in your outward eſtate, and if Blaſtings, Mildews, Loſſes by Sea and Land, Diſappointments, Impoveriſhments many waies were lookt at as a juſt puniſhment from God for the great Coldneſs dead-heartedneſs and indiſpoſedneſs, to the Worſhip of God in his Houſe in ſpecial, among other ſins that are to be found among us, there would be good Scripture warrant for our ſo reckoning. Men complain Trading is dead, they do not thrive, they go behind hand, cannot make both ends meet, they riſe early, go to bed late, eat the bread of Carefulneſs and all will not doe. No wonder while God's Houſe is under-valued and neglected.

But ſuppoſe thou may'ſt gain a ſmall matter while thou ought'ſt to have been at a Sermon,

and for the gains thereof didst omit an opportunity of seeing and Conversing with Christ in an Ordinance, he judges your selves in the Case whether you are Gainers or losers. A few pence gain'd ; a goodly price that I was valued at will Jesus Christ say : And take this for an everlasting Truth, the same price we put upon the Word of Christ, we put upon Christ himselfe: We condemn Judas for betraying his Master for Thirty peices of Silver, *But who art thou O man that judgest another and doest the same thing?* He that cannot find in his heart to come to a Sermon for fear to miss the taking or earning a little mony would sell Jesus Christ himself at a cheaper Rate than ever Judas did, if he had the like Temptation before him, Nay he does part with him, let him goe (yea & that for ought he knows irrecoverably & forever) for the love of that which he proposes to himself to gain in the mean time. If you will not now believe it, a little Time will put it beyond dispute. When an evil day comes, and you want those words to live upon that you might have then heard, and that Instruction and Edification that you might have gained, Conscience will then tell you that you sinned by such Neglect and got no profit. *Martha* got a severe Reproof by being careful and cumbered with many things, while she should have sate at Christs feet and been hearing a Sermon ; and such Reproofs

Reproofs shall you have from your own Consciences one day, and should take them now. No man shall ever gain in the winding up by that Time that he pinches out of the Service of God whether Publique, Private, or Secret.

2. My second Appeal is to those that have subordinated all other things to the Service of God, and can make their secular Occasions give way thereunto, and consequently have been and are Careful, Faithful attenders on His Word and Ordinances; and I would ask you, Did you ever lose, did you not ever gain by being so imployed? Have you not cause to account those your best Houres? Had you ever any just Cause to repent of your Time so spent? Would you part with what you have met with in the House of God for a Thousand Worlds? Are not all other pleasures and profits most inconsiderable and contemptible things compared with what God's House has afforded you? Say, speak out, that others may be informed and confirmed by your experience. Have you not found that Illumination, that Quickning, that Edifying power and Grace accompanying Divine Institutions that was no where else to be found, and that you could never pretend to any thing like thereto from all your Labours about the World?

Is not this Doctrine true, have you not found and felt it true? cannot you *give your Evidence in the Case*? Then speak for God and for his House, stand up for the Honour of the same. Tell one another as you have opportunity of the Good things there, discourse together of the rich Entertainment you have met with, and as you meet with others to whom such discourses may be of use, let them know how you have fared there. The world does not believe that the *foolishness of Preaching* has such vertue in it as the report of the Word attributes to it, any more than *Nathaneel* could believe that *any Good could come out of Nazareth*; do you therefore testifie to what you have seen, and advise them also to come and see.

3. My third Appeal is to those that after they have sometimes enjoyed, have again lost the Liberties of God's House (and those that have experienc'd both the sweetness of the enjoyment and the bitterness of the bereavement are best able to judge in this Case) Now they will all tell you with one mouth that there is no place to spend Time in like the House of God. And such is the Testimony of *David* in the *Text*; He had lived at the Well-head, been often drinking of the waters of the Sanctuary, and abundantly satisfied with the

the Good things thereof, he had lived near the green Meadowes and ſtill waters, and frequently taken his ſweet repaſt there, he had ſeen the Lord's Glory and Beauty in the Sanctuary and had been enlightned, quickned and comforted there, for which Favours you have him in ſundry Pſalms tuneing his Harp and Pſaltery and fixing his heart to the Praiſes of God, and bleſſing himſelf and the people in thoſe high enjoyments, in reſpect of which God had ſo dealt with Iſrael as with no other people. But now you find him in quite another Frame, longing, fainting, Crying out like a perſon in great diſtreſs, fareing like a poor forlorn, miſerable wretch, in a ſtate moſt ſadly afflictive and deplorable, intimating that he could have been glad to change Conditons with the Swallow and Sparrow, when he ſeems to envy that priviledge which they enjoyed and he was bereaved of; what was the matter? what ail'd him? why alas this was his Caſe (a woful Caſe indeed!) that ſweet, precious, beloved place the *Houſe of God* he could not come at, thoſe Glorious and gainful daies which he had with ſo much pleaſure and advantage ſpent were now paſt and gone with him, and when or how to be recovered he knew not, and he ſo demeans himſelf as one that both underſtood what he ſaid, and ſaid as he

he meant when he ſet ſo high a value upon one of thoſe daies.

Of like nature and ſcope is *Pſal.* 42. and had you ſeen him at that Time when he Compoſed it, you would have found him in a moſt ſolemn frame, his eyes weeping and himſelf making meat of his tears when he had wept them, his Heart beating and panting, his ſoul fainting and poured out within him, and had you conſulted with him he would have told you this lamentable ſtory, I once dwelt in Sion, and had mine Habitation in Jeruſalem, that pleaſant place where the Lines were befallen me, & where I had a goodly Heritage & had free acceſs to the Houſe of God, & thither was wont to go *with the Company that kept Holyday*, but now I am an Out-caſt from the Temple in the land of *Jordan* and the *Hermonites*, I cannot come to Meeting, I cannot hear a Sermon as I was wont, by the loſs of which Mercy I have learnt (ſomewhat more than ever) the worth of it, a loſs that can by no other attainment be compenſated. ---- This was the cauſe of his mourning, and the inward diſquietment and caſting down of his ſoul, and this alſo cauſed him to make that Prayer in the following Pſalm *ver.* 3, 4. that God would conduct him back to his Holy Hill and to his Tabernacles, that he might again goe to the Altar of God his exceeding Joy, and promiſes his

his praiſes for the hearing of his prayers, nor would any thing raiſe up his down-caſt ſoul but the Hopes that thoſe prayers ſhould be heard. And it is to be noted in both theſe Pſalms (the like alſo may be obſerved elſe where) when bemoaning his Exilement he never once mentions his own Houſe or his Relations or family Concerns all which were (beyond diſpute) according to the value of each very dear to him, but this is the matter with him, *the Houſe of God!* And ſo when he was driven out of *Jeruſalem*, he ſaies nothing of his Kingdom, or Palace, or any Relations he left behind, only the Ark and its Habitation, the Houſe of God where the Lord dwelt and afforded his Preſence, *This, this*, I ſay he thought and diſcourſed of, and thereby ſhewed what lay at his Heart, and how much he prized them above other Things which he accounted not worthy to be mentioned the ſame day with theſe. Thus alſo when ſick *Hezekiah* had the Sentence of Death (that was upon him) reverſed, and an Addition of fifteen Years promiſed, he asked a ſign where by he might be aſſured about his going up again to the Houſe of God, as if he had valued his Time of going thither more than all his Time beſides, or as if his reprieval from the Grave were therefore principally

gratefull

grateful to him because he might have the liberty of rendering the Lord a further visit there *Isa*: 38. 22. the fear of seeing the Lord no more (probably he means in his House the chief place for seeing God) having been most grievous to him in his sickness *ver.* 11. whereupon he engaged that he would not only goe up thither but dwell there to praise him all the daies of his life.

And at this day how many just and Righteous ones are there in the world that are begging on their knees with Tears in their eies that they might enjoy one of these dayes of the Son of Man that we have plenty of, they would wonder to see the streets and shops so full of people while a Sermon is a preaching which they would gladly leave their very meat to hear. what a Pathetical lecture would they read you of the worth of Sermons and Ordinances! How feelingly would they discourse of these things and tell you that whatever outward good things are left them they do all avail them little or nothing while banished from the House of God, and how affectionately would they exhort and beseech us to *know in this our day the things of our peace*, to improve every inch of Hearing-Time, and that with utmost Seriousness and Intentness, to believe them while they do give evidence to the Truth of this Doctrine, and in so doing speak what they

they have seen and felt, lest we also pay dear for our learning (as they have done) that *one day in the Courts of the Lord is worth a Thousand.*

So much may serve for the first Reason or Argument.

The second followes.

Reas. 2. *One day in God's House is better than a Thousand*, Because serious waiting there is not only the way to have these unparaleld Blessings already mentioned, but also the surest and safest way to obtain all other Good things which we need, and for the getting of which the House of God is too often neglected, yea and to have them sanctified and secured too. This being cleared will evince the Truth of the Doctrine against all Gain-sayers.

This is the common Objection, Men cannot come to Meeting on a Lecture-Day because their business will not give leave, this and that work calls for their presence, or else they shall be great sufferers. The Husband-man (especially in seed-Time and Harvest) has no leisure, he must get his seed into the Ground and his Harvest into the Barn, The day-Labourer gets his Living by the sweat of his Browes, and *has but from hand to mouth*, and therefore he can spare no time for the Worship

of

of God. The Handicraft's man has work bespoken, and muſt *keep touch*, leſt he loſe his Cuſtome, The Shop-keeper will tell you Rent is high, Trading dead, he has a Family to maintain and therefore muſt loſe no opportunity of taking Mony, and Lecture-dayes are his Market-dayes and he cannot leave his ſhop, tho' if none did appear to buy (as mee thinks none ſhould that did conſider that the doors of Chriſt's Houſe are then open, where better Commodities are to be bought viz. *Wine and milk*, ſoul-maintenance, and that *without mony and without Price*) there would be no occaſion for him to ſit there to ſell. Thus when men want an heart they never want an excuſe, thoſe that have no mind to a Duty will find pretences enough to colour over their neglect of it: But it were an eaſie matter to Retort the Arguments upon themſelves & they would argue more ſtrongly the other way. Is not your Buſineſs for Heaven of as great Concernment and Haſt? are you ſo forward, ſo much before hand therein as that without any conſiderable Damnage you can ſpare ever and anon a Sermon and not miſs it? Is not a Seed-time and an Harveſt-time for your *meat that endures to eternal Life* as buſie a time with you as that wherein you are labouring for the *meat that perisheth*? Is not the Lords care in *riſing betimes and ſending* to you, and that both

in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon an Intimation that the Lord ſees you need ſuch Diſpenſations, for he does no needleſs thing. Have you not as much need to take every ſeaſon and lay up for endleſs Eternity as to provide againſt a long Winter? Eſpecially when yon conſider that you are going *towards*, and know not how ſoon you may come *to* the place where *there is no Work, Device nor Invention Eccleſ.* 9. 10. Have you ſuch a meaſure of knowledge as that it needs no Augmentation? ſuch a ſtock of Grace lying by you that you need no increaſe of it? Or are your Graces ſo active as that you have no occaſion for Word and Ordinances to excite them and keep them in exerciſe? Is not Trading for Heaven very dead alſo, ſo that there is much cauſe for the Lord to complain as of old *I have laboured in vain Iſa.* 49. 4. ? and will not the loſs of Goſpel-offers (as puniſhments for the ſlights you put upon them) be a greater Detriment than the loſs of a good Cuſtomer for want of complying with him? Nay ſhould not your Care and Thoughtfulneſs, Labour and Diligence about the things of *this Life* teach you that then much more ought your Activity to ſhew it ſelf about Things of a *better*? Might not ſuch conſiderations as theſe afford you a ſilencing Anſwer to ſuch Excuſes?

But let me further add

That even this is the way to promote your worldly Advantage too, the words immediately following the Text are a proof of it. After the Pſalmiſt had given his judgment upon a day in God's Houſe above a Thouſand, and made his Choice of being a door-keeper there rather than a dweller elſe where, he gives the reaſon of his ſo chooſing, and its taken from the Good things there to be had, *viz.* Grace and Glory, but leſt any ſhould ſay what ſhall we do for other things, he adds, *No good thing will he with-hold &c.* Chriſt ſpeakes the ſame thing *Mat.* 6. 33. *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God & his righteouſneſs, & all other things ſhall be added unto you.* Whatever elſe is wanting ſhall be given into the Bargain, caſt in over and above. That Kingdom which you principally, firſtly ſeek ſhall be given you, and all other things ſhall be ſupplied alſo. Honouring the Lord with our ſubſtance (and by the like reaſon with our Time ſpent in his Service as we have an Opportunity) is the way to have *the Barn filled with plenty &c. Prov.* 3. 8, 10. To promote this ſearch after Wiſdom (*and waiting at Wiſdom's poſts is the way to find Wiſdom Pro.* 8. 34.) he tells us that *Riches and Honours are in her left hand Chapt.* 3. 16. It is not Labouring or Contriving, but God's bleſſing that makes Rich. Now the dayly Waiter and Watcher at Wiſdom's Gates to hear Chriſt is pronounced

pronounced *Bleſſed*, he is the man that is under God's bleſſing and therefore ſhall have ſo much of other things alſo as is convenient for him. In Commendation of Godlineſs, & to promote the practice of it, it is ſaid to be *great Gain* and the *promiſe of the life that now is* as well as *that which is to come* made to it 1. *Tim.* 4. 8. And he that hath any Good Thing in the Promiſe is as ſure of it as if it were in his hand, yea coming in a Promiſe it's far more ſweet and ſafe than if it came in the way of common Providence. That known Text *Mal.* 3. 8, 12. does abundantly anſwer the Objection and prove the Poſition before us, they are faulted *ver.* 8. for Robbery in the matters of God's Houſe, they brought not in their Tythes and Offerings, the reaſon of their with-holding them is hinted at *viz.* becauſe they accounted the Worſhip of God to be too chargeable for them, they could not afford to goe to the coſt of it. Nay (ſaith the Lord) if that be the Reaſon, do you fill my Houſe and ſee if I will not fill yours and abundantly make up to you what Expence ſoever you ſhall be at by ſerving me. While you Robb'd me I curſt you, and if you will obey me in the matters of my Houſe I will bleſs you.

From this Text theſe things are Evident

1. That men are prone to deal very unworthily with God in the Concerns of his Houſe and are apt to be too ſtrait-handed there.

2. One Reaſon of their ſo carrying it is for fear they ſhould loſe in their outward Eſtate thereby, they cannot tend it, they cannot afford it is the pretenſe, tho' its true *they have no heart to it* lies at the bottom.

3. That ſo to do is in God's account Robbery, & is puniſhed with a Curſe, the Vine caſts her fruit, the Devourer eats up their Labours and inſtead of ſaving they are great loſers thereby.

4. That the only way to be bleſt in their Labours and to thrive in the world, is to fill God's Houſe, to give their attendance there with their Tythes and Offerings let them not be wanting in their duty to him, and he would abundantly make up to them what they laid out for him: And tho' the Lord is worthy to be believed upon his word, yet he condeſcends ſo far as to put things upon the Tryal *Prove me ſaith the Lord*, if you will not believe me try me, and you ſhall find it true, while my Houſe was empty ſo were yours alſo, and what you pineh't from me you loſt, and a great deal more with it, but upon your amending ſee if I will not proportionably and obſervably bleſs you.

You never knew any man impoverished by ſpending two houres in a week at a Lecture, nor enriched by the Contrary.

I have heard of "a poor man being asked "by a pious Miniſter why he came not to Lect-"ure, anſwered not want of will but meer Po-"verty hindred him, for *that* day in which he "did not work his children muſt not eat, "being adviſed by the Miniſter to come to "Lecture, and promiſed to be paid for his "dayes work he readily came to Meeting, "and as conſtantly for his Pay at Night, but "after a little Time being ask'd the Reaſon "why tho' at Lecture he came not for his "mony as formerly, he ſaid that he found "God had ſo bleſt him that he could main-"tain his Family by his labour and ſpare a "Lecture time too. ---- And if others will try in like manner they ſhall have the like bleſſing.

It is ſaid *Mony anſwers all things* Eccl. 10. 19. yea but the Bleſſing of God in the way of ſerious attending on him in his Houſe will anſwer mony alſo, will ſupply that too. God hath many ſecret waies to bleſs his ſervants, and doth abundantly ſend in what we lay out for him. Our Fathers in this Wilderneſs experienc'd this, they came for the ſake of God's Houſe, and he ſoon filled theirs, turned the

Wilderneſs into a fruitful Land, gave them what they denyed and left behind them for his and the Goſpel's ſake. And while the *firſt love* and zeal for Chriſt and the things of his Houſe were kept up they had much outward proſperity; our coldneſs there has brought thinneſs and leanneſs both outward and ſpiritual upon us.

This alſo is the ſure way to have all our other good things ſanctified to us: By the Word and prayer are all our outward bleſſings ſanctified 1. *Tim.* 4. 5. and without this they are a ſnare and Trap. If men would obſerve, there is none but loſes as much and more than he gains by robbing God of his Time, or at leaſt he loſes the bleſſing, and what is the outward enjoyment without a Bleſſing? why, it is for his hurt rather than for his good, and its better to want ſuch things in mercy than to have them in wrath.

Thus much may ſerve for the Confirmation of the Doctrine.

We come now to the Application or Improvement,

And this word is profitable for { Information or Inſtruction / Reproof or Correction / Exhortation & Direction,

1. by way of Information and Inſtruction

Firſt

1. See here the Wiſdome of God in providing ſo well for the promoting of his own publique Worſhip while he orders ſo much profit to attend the waiters upon him therein, hereby obviating the objections that may be made againſt it, & that great one eſpecially *Mal.* 3. 4. *what profit is it that we have ſerved God and kept his Ordinance?* What profit? more than *Cent. per Cent.* profit, even a Thouſand to one profit, and that is great gain indeed. The Lord out-bids all that ever the world, or the Devil the god of the world can do for his followers. Reaſon ſhould teach us to go into *his* vineyard where we may have the moſt pleaſant work and beſt wages. Did men underſtand and believe, there would be no great difficulty in this matter.

Saul to weaken *David*'s Intereſt in the people and draw them off from him, intimates that they could not expect much profit or high preferment from the ſon of *Jeſſe* (1. *Sam.* 22. 7.) inſinuating that where there is an expectation of the greateſt Reward, there men would be moſt like to be found. Then God may well expect that we ſhould preſer his Houſe before our own houſes, Fields, Ships or Shops, becauſe all of them cannot yield the like profit by more than a Thouſand to one Diſference. He muſt needs account God not worthy to be believed, or Fellowſhip with

him in his Houſe not worthy to be enjoyed, that is not perſwaded (by pitty any ſhould need to be compell'd) there to dwell, and to improve all opportunities of Seeing and Enquiring there. Wiſdom invites men to *her* Houſe *Prov.* 9. and the fooliſh one calls upon Simple ones that are going right on, to turn in thither, the former invites to beaſts ſlain, Wines mingled and Table furniſhed, and promiſes life upon obedience *(hear and your ſouls ſhall live Iſa.* 55. 3.) The latter ſpeaks only of water and bread, and that ſtollen and in ſecret too, concealing in the mean time Death and depths of Hell the puniſhment of deluded fools. Mee thinks none need be at a loſs at which houſe to turn in. Chriſt would be no way offended for turning our backs upon his Ordinances if we knew any place where to mend our ſelves, but to leave him for lying vanities makes him angry.

There is nothing but Atheiſm and Unbelief that keeps any poor creature from making this his *One thing* to dwell in the Houſe of God.

2. Hence we are further Informed how careful the Lord is of us alſo & of our Good as well as of the promoting his own ſervice, in that he does not oblige us to do any ſervice for him, nor to ſpend one day or hour but ſo as ſhall be to our

our own higheſt advantage. No Worſhip of God ſhall interfere with our profit, He will diſpence with his Worſhip when works of neceſſity and mercy for our ſelves or others beſpeak our Attendance, and he never enjoyns it but it is beſt for us and moſt for our good. This is great kindneſs indeed to poor Creatures that He will not be ſerved but when we ſhall be profited, and has ſo diſpoſed that it is alwaies for our profit to ſerve Him. If we were rightly affected towards God we ſhould need no more or other Argument than this to bring us to the Houſe of God and oblige us to the moſt ſerious attendance *viz.* that we are about God's work, doing *Him* ſervice, that he will be glorified thereby, would be enough to us; but the Lord will have us to know that we are then about our own work alſo, and that which moſt nearly concerns us and will unſpeakably advantage us. Altho' we muſt deny our ſelves and take much pains to ſerve God, if we do it acceptably, yet all this while we are working for our ſelves, and the Harveſt will be our own, and that a Thouſand times more than we could have gotten elſe where. You will ſay when the Beggars that lay by the High-waies and Hedges were invited to the Marriage-feaſt they were not bidden to their loſſe, no, nor they that had Farms and Merchandize neither, they never had ſuch Incomes nor made ſuch

Bargains

Bargains as they might have had and made there. Let none think it hard that God requires one day in seven for the more immediate service of Himself, nay if he should require six of the seven and leave us but one, while he gives us the profit of more than a Thousand dayes in one, there is no colour for any Complaint. The Lord commanded them in the Wilderness to rest on the Sabbath days and gives this as a reason why they should so doe, because he had on the sixth day given them the Bread of two dayes *Exod.* 16. 29. So when he commands us to wait on him in his House on a Lecture-day (and by the way do not account that attending on Lectures is meerly a free-will offering, tho' if it were so, God's people should be *a willing people*, and willing in their free-will Offerings, but that General Rule of taking all Opportunities of doing and consequently of getting Good is not without its Consideration here, and if the Minister be charged to *preach ---- in season and out of season* 2. *Tim.* 4. 1. 2. by like reason the people are obliged to hear) doe not think we are hardly dealt with, straitned in our time, abridged of our liberty *to labour and do all that we have to doe on the six dayes* seeing our own profit is propounded and such profit as has been mentioned, to induce us thereunto.

If

If a company of poor indigent people should be ordered by some great Person to wait at his Gate two hours on such a day in the week, there to receive a liberal Dole from his bountiful Hand, they would account themselves bountifully dealt with while they had so much more given them than they could have gotten by their own industry in the mean Time; And that is the Case before us.

3. This also Informs us how much we stand Debtors in God's Account for every day's Liberty in his House, he sets down a Thousand for One and after that Rate will reckon with us, and therefore we should reckon so also, and hold our selves engaged to make an Answerable improvement of them that we may render proportionably. This is the choice, the Cream, the Quintessence of all our Time, for this especially are wee bound to lift up our eyes and souls and bless the name of the bountiful God, and that a Thousand times more than for any other Time. Thanks are to bee in proportion to the quantity of the Kindness received: As they that have much forgiven will love much, so they that have much given should thank much, praise much, which they will do if they love much. We should bless God heartily every morning we rise, for bringing us to the Light of another day, but

wo

we should bless him a Thousand times more for a day in his Courts, because it is a Thousand times better. It was an exceeding great and precious Promise that the Lord gave to his People *Isa* 30. 20. a rich & high Cordial fitted on purpose for an evil day that tho their meat should be bread of Adversity and drink water of Affliction yet *their eyes shall see their Teachers*, they shall have Preaching and Ordinances among them. Alas, how many have bread of Adversity and their Teachers removed too! How should the scarcity of that *Best of all Commodities* serve to enhaunce the price of it! All our Time is precious, but this part of our Time much more precious than the rest. Many account Sabbath-dayes lost-dayes, and Lecture-dayes broken dayes, no, they are good dayes and full dayes, dayes full of Blessing, one of them has the Good of a Thousand daies in it. Some had rather sickness or Foul-weather should fall out an a Sabbath-day or on a Lecture-day than any other, & secretly think it is so much Time saved, not considering how much the Wisdom and kindness of God is thereby Reflected upon, and themselves prejudiced.

4. Hence we may learn what is the best Course to redeem Time, which is a duty incumbent upon all Christians *Ephes.* 5. 16.

The

The ſpending as much of it as you may in the House of God is the beſt way of Redeeming it. If men were good Husbands of their Time, it were an eaſie matter to ſave ever and anon a Day for the Service of God and yet not ſtrike one ſtroak the leſs about their other ordinary Occaſions; and one day thus Redeemed, provided it be rightly improved ſo as to become a good day to them, is more than a Thouſand dayes.

5. From hence alſo it followes, that it is a greater Bleſſing to a People to have the Liberties of God's Houſe than to have a Confluence of all this World's Good flowing in upon them. They are better that enjoy the Houſe of God among them, tho' they are ſtraitened in other outward Things, than they which have the greateſt outward Enlargements without it.

God ſo orders it, that the Richeſt places in the World (as to Things of the World) are very poor upon this account, while his People tho' dwelling in a Barren Land have the Riches of Earth and Heaven both, in having the Houſe of God among them. Theſe Gleanings of Ephraim are better than the Vintage of Abiezer. Suppoſe a Place in a Temperate Zone, that is an healthy Climate,

has

has a ſweet Air, pleaſant Situation, fertile Soyl, Havens for Ships, a place of great Trade and much Reſort, ſo that what they have not of their own they may bring home (tho' from far) out of other places; Imagine an *Eden* of all manner of pleaſures and Delights, yet under all theſe Conſiderations and Circumſtances it is a miſerable place if the Houſe of God be wanting. That poor ſolitary Pilgrim *Jacob*, lying in the open Air, having the cold Earth for his Bed, and a ſtone for his Pillow yet the place being turned into a *Bethel*, an Houſe of God he fared better than if he had been accommodated with all the Entertainment that a Princes Palace could have afforded him. *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs tho' dwelling in Tents, fed with bread and Water without the Fleſh-pots of *Egypt* and other good things they ſo much longed for, yet being the Church in the Wilderneſs, and having God's Tabernacle in the midſt of them, were in a far happier Condition than the Canaanites who dwelt in a land flowing with Milk and Honey but no Houſe of God near them.

Our Fathers coming into this Wilderneſs, and bringing Chriſt and the Ordinances of his Houſe along with them, never repented them of the Exchange they had made, nor were ſo mindful of the pleaſant Land from whence they came as to return thither again, tho' they had

had opportunities of ſo doing See *Heb.* 11. 15. Nay the Lord prevented them by turning the Wilderneſs into a fruitful Land, and the Houſe of God ſet up and attended will make any place ſo. After the large Deſcription of that great City given by the Prophet Ezekiel, we find its real Glory contained in the name by which it was called viz. *Jehovah ſhamma.* The Temple of the Lord and his preſence in the Temple renders a place glorious. Never complain of Hardſhips and Difficulties, the Conſideration of the Tranſcendent Goodneſs of God to be enjoyed in his Houſe ſhould ſwallow up all Difficulties whatſoever. Dwelling in Tents of wickedneſs, nay in the Palaces of the World is to be deſpiſed in Compariſon of dwelling here. He that for Elbow-room in the World removes from under Word & Ordinances makes a very imprudent Choice. Its Religion, not any nor all other things that *makes* a place. It was the Preſence, Houſe and Worſhip of God in the Land of Canaan principally that made it the *Glory of all Lands, the Land of Glory or the glorious Land* (as it is called Ezek. 20. 6. Dan. 11. 16, 41.) Its therefore glorious becauſe it is *Immanuel's land Iſa.* 8. 8. This Mount Sion ſo beautiful a place, becauſe *out of Sion the perfection of beauty God hath ſhined Pſal.* 50. 2.

Prize

Prize Gospel-Ordinances and Christ's presence in them as the chiefest Glory of our Land, and evermore pray that such Glory may alwayes *dwell* in our Land.

6. Then we should above all other Things fear losing a day in God's House, yea fear losing the *House of God* and being *outed* of our Possession thereof. According to the value of a thing is our Love to it, Desire to keep it, Fear to lose it. Now if being in God's House is a Thousand times better than other-where; then we should be a Thousand times more afraid about that than any thing else. It is now a Time of Fear with us, some fear they shall lose this thing, some that, and some another, but above all fear and tremble for the *Ark*, fear for the *House & Ordinances of GOD*, *there* is most Cause of Fear, we have a Thousand times more cause to fear for God's House than for our own houses, lands &c.

And if we are providentially kept from the House of God by Sickness or otherwise, it should afflict us more than being kept from our own business. To have lost a day through any inadvertency or neglect of his own, or through any Adverse Providence that has disappointed him in his Expectation or blasted his Endeavours, is afflictive to an industrious man: but to

to have loſt a day from or in the Houſe of God, ſhould be by many degrees more grievous to a ſerious ſoul; nor ſhould our being driven out of our own houſes be ſo yrkſome to us as the Lord's plucking up ſtakes, or breaking up houſe among us. We live in Times of Plucking up and pulling down, to be now *ſeeking great Things for our ſelves in the world* would be abſurd and blame worthy *Jer.* 45. but to be ſeeking the greater things of God's Houſe, and to be moſt Thoughtful about the Continuance thereof, and our dwelling therein all the dayes of our life, is very becoming in us, and will be no leſs acceptable unto God. The only way to ſecure what is our own is to be moſt ſolicitous about the concerns of God's Houſe; let our Hearts be mainly there, and then we may roul the Burden of all other Cares upon him.

7. This Doctrine doth intimate to us with what ſpirit and Frame we ſhould go, when ever we go to the Houſe of God *viz.* with an high eſteem of it, & Expectation of great things in & from it. Value an hour there worth a Thouſand, and expect to receive accordingly. They had no more becauſe they *aſk* no more *Jam.* 4. 2, 3. and we have no more becauſe we *expect* no more. There is ordinarily ſome proportion between our Receivings and our Expectations; and the Reaſon is becauſe Ex-

Expectations ariſing from the ſence of our need and the reallizing that *there* is a ſupply to be had, and being accompanied with anſwerable preparation and Attention, bring us under a promiſe. The Text tells us there is a Thouſand times more to be had in the Houſe of God than elſe-where, then we ſhould expect as much as the Word ſaith, and the Lord is not wont to fail his people of their Expectations *Pſal.* 9. 18. *The Expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh.* But we may add ſomething further to this in the ſequel.

8. Is one Day in God's Houſe better than a Thouſand, then the Lord expects that they who dwell in his Houſe ſhould *be* better and *do* better than other men. *Where much is given much is required.* They who live in His Houſe fare better than any others, are *known above all the families of the earth Amos* 3. 2. *He hath not dealt ſo with any other Nation Pſal.* 147. 20. Such have better Liberties, better meanes, better opportunities, (a Thouſand times better) than thoſe who are not thus favoured; and therefore their knowledge, their principles, their Hearts and Converſations ſhould be better. If any Heathen have more moral Honeſty, Sobriety, Love &c. than we, beware ſuch do not riſe up in Judgment againſt us, condemn and triumph over us in the Day of Account. The Lord does (and juſtly may) look

look for better Grapes from his Vineyard upon which he had bestowed such costly and careful Husbandry, and in the midst of which Himself dwelt, than he could have expected from the Wilderness *Isa*, 5. 1,---4. Hence that chiding and stinging Interrogation, implying great disappointment of just expectation in himself (the Lord speaking there after the manner of men) and unreasonable, unaccountable Ingratitude in them *ver.* 4. *Wherefore when I looked it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*

We that have all the Precious and Pleasant things of God's House afforded, and at this time continued when it is not so with others, are better dealt with, and at a Thousand times more chargeable rate maintained than they; if our Returns be not somewhat singular, we shall never be able to hold up our Heads when God shall thus interrogate us as he did them, and if he should *take away our Hedge and break down our stone wall, and leave us to be eaten up and trodden down*, and *forbid the clouds to rain upon us* so that in the Issue we be *laid waste* as he adds *ver.* 5, 6. If he should *take away the Vineyard from us, and let it out unto others that should render him the fruit in their seasons* as *Mat.* 21. 41. and when he had done all this, refer the matter to our own Judgment as he did to theirs *Isa.* 5. 3. our Consciences would con-

constrain us to say *Righteous art thou O Lord.* God was angry with *Hezekiah* not because he made no Returns at all (that sanctifying Grace he had in him would not let him be altogether unthankful) but it's said *Hezekiah rendered not* — According *to the benefits done*, and hence was Wrath upon him 2. *Chron.* 32. 25. His Returns were not according to Expectation so proportionable to his Receivings as they might have been, and there lay the Controversy. We wrong and reflect upon the Name and House of God and the priviledges we enjoy there, under so many *better dayes* and *better things* for want of *better* Conversations, with which tho' the Lord may bear long, he will not alwaies.

USE. 2. By way of Reproof

If One day in God's House be worth a Thousand, then they are blame-worthy who in their Judgement or practice, or both, are guilty of slighting, Undervalueing or Neglecting the same, and what is lightly esteemed will be neglected. Now these are faulty, not only for want of due respect to an *Institution of God* or *Instituted Worship* (which ought alwaies to be observed with great Veneration, as that about which the Lord is wont more especially to shew himself a Jealous God) but they are

to be reproved from the *Text* under that Notion as not conſulting their own intereſt, while they put a ſlight upon that wherein their greateſt Profit & Advantage is concerned, herein they miſs it in not doing well for themſelves.

And here we may take notice either of a Total (or at leaſt very frequent) Neglect in ſome, ſo as not to come at all, or if they do its very rarely; or elſe when they do come it is not in ſuch a manner as they would if they believed there were ſuch profit there. Non-Attendance, rare-Attendance, ſuperficial and ſlighty Attendance are all of them very unſuitable and unbecoming ſuch a place and ſuch Ordinances.

There are ſome whom you ſhall ſeldom ſee at a Sermon, at leaſt upon a Lecture day, are ſtrangers to the Houſe of God, I cannot ſay do not *know*, but may ſay are very rarely *found in* the way thither. A moſt unworthy thing! that God ſhould ſet up an Houſe among us, and promiſe to afford us his Preſence, and give us a meeting there, and men cann't find in their Hearts to wait on him at the Time and Place appointed. That God ſhould make ſuch preparation for us in his Houſe, and ſend to invite us, and tell us he will make us very welcome there to the beſt he has, and that he is there waiting to entertain us and be gracious

to us, and any ſhould ſend him that Anſwer that they have no mind to come, or if they do come, it is in ſuch a manner (which the heart-ſearching and all-ſeeing God obſerves,) as does declare that their whole heart is not in the work.

To ſee the High-way to the Houſe of God mourn in *a day of Contradiction* and *treading down in the valley of Viſion* becauſe men are through Perſecution by an Hand of Violence hindred from walking therein, is a great Affliction, & matter of ſore Lamentation; but to ſee the High-way thither mourn in a time of Liberty and Encouragement, either becauſe when they may they will not walk therein, or if they do, it is with much Formality & Indifferency, this is much more a Lamentation as being the great ſin and provocation of the Lords Sons and Daughters. When the way is blockt up by Perſecution it is but the *Suffering* of Profeſſors (tho' the ſin of Perſecutors) but their own declining when the way is open is the great *ſin* of Profeſſors. If when God ſets and holds open the doors of his Houſe (which are the Gate of Heaven) they put away Eternal life from themſelves, that is far worſe than to have others keep them off from it, and the meanes of attaining it. For themſelvs to bid God depart from them is a ſorer evil than for others to bid them depart from God.

And

And indeed ſuch do as it were ſay concerning God, he may be gone from them if he will, they care not for the Knowledge of his wayes, nor do they deſire to ſee or be acquainted with him.

Some do this out of Opinion, pretending to have found a better Rule and greater *light within*, and thereupon deſpiſe external Ordinances, lay them aſide as things beneath themſelves, calling them *Forms* which perſons of their Attainments have no need of, tho' it is much to be doubted that while they caſt off Inſtituted Forms (there is a Form of *wholeſome Words*, and a Form of *wholſome Worſhip* alſo) they leave themſelves *without Form* and (its to be feared) will be found (as the ancient *Chaos* was) alſo *void, and darkneſs over the facce of* them too, notwithſtanding all their pretences to a more-than-ordinary Degree of Light.

Of theſe I ſhall ſay little at preſent, becauſe I preſume there are few or none here this day to hear me: Only this word or two *viz.* That is a falſe and unfreindly *Light within* that bereaves men of the Light of the Word and help of Ordinances from *without*, from whence ſincere ſouls have alwayes found (through the Concurrence of the Spirit) the greateſt Quickenings and ſafeſt Conduct. *If the Light within be darkneſs*, (or lead men into darkneſs, and

keep them out of those wayes wherein they might meet with enlightening) *how great is that darkness!* It little availes to dispute with men that are wise in their own eyes, and wedded to their own wayes ; our best way of Argueing with such is practical, *viz.* by so Prizeing, Valuing, Using the Ordinances of God's House, as that our Proficiency *under* them and Benefit *by* them may be even in their Consciences a Testimony *for* them, which will be wanting if we that use them live no better than they that use them not. This only I shall say that *David* (a man full of Light and Love) desired that he might take a lease of the House of God to dwell in for his Life-time *Psal.* 27. 4. And Christ promised that in the way of Preaching & Baptism (and by like reason all other Ordinances of his House) he would be with them to the end of the world; & therefore the Command to wait on him in such Institutions, and the promise of his presence and Blessing upon so waiting concerns us in these dales, and will those that shall succeed us so long as the world lasts. Know also that no Christian is or shall be (really and according to Rule I mean, what ever he may through any mistake conceive) *above* Ordinances whilst *beneath* Heaven.

Others see no Glory in God's House, find no Good, Get no profit thereby, and therefore neglect

neglect it, an Objection long agone made by them, and Answered by the Prophet *Malachi Chapt.* 3. something has been already spoken thereunto, I shall add a few words more. Possibly their own experience may tel them so, they using Ordinances (when they did use them) with their wonted slightiness and Formality, found no profit in them, and thereupon gave over; laying the blame upon the Ordinances which was only justly chargeable upon their Formality and Hypocrisie in the use of the Ordinances.

And here note that Christ himself gives that as the true Reason of their worshiping God in vain *Mat.* 15. 8, 9. not because it was a vain thing to worship God, but because they did not worship him in a right manner, they were Hypocrites *ver.* 7. and they did *draw nigh him with their mouth and honour him with their lips but their heart was far from him*, and therefore did they *worship him in vain*. It is no sign that the Things in God's House are not Good Things, best Things, yea a Thousand times better than other things, because they are not so to thee, No, no, it remains an everlasting Truth that there are *fat and marrowed Things* in the House of God, tho' they may seem to be dry, sapless and unsavory Things unto thee. There is Divine Glory and Beauty *there* tho' thou see it not, and if it be hidden from thee thou

thou mayſt with trembling Heart and Hands turn to the 2. *Cor.* 4. 3. and there read thy *preſent* Condition at leaſt (however God may in mercy enlighten thee *afterwards*) *If our Goſpel be hid it is hid to them that are loſt.* Thou goeſt up and down the world with the black mark of a *loſt man* upon thee. If that be true that *God's word doeth Good to them that walk uptightly* Mic. 2. 7. what mayſt thou judge of thy ſelf to whom it does no good? Do not therefore forbear to come becauſe thou haſt hitherto found no profit, rather prepare thy ſelf ſo to come as that thou mayeſt find that profit which is there to be had, and which others have experienced.

Some out of ſloth cannot endure to take pains to come, at leaſt if they are at any conſiderable Diſtance, or if there be any thing of Difficulty therein. A little Indiſpoſition of *body* (eſpecially if it meets with a great Indiſpoſition of *ſpirit*) ſhall be excuſe enough, and ſo a little unſeaſonableneſs of Weather &c. I know God *will have mercy and not ſacrifice*, but let men beware they do not put a cheat upon themſelves: Self-deceivers are the worſt Deceivers, and that principally in ſuch momentous matters as theſe are. Sloth is full of excuſes, and Littleſsneſs furniſhed with pretences. *A Sluggard is wiſer in his own conceit than ſeven men that can render a Reaſon.* Prov. 26. 16.

Doe

Doe thus in thy outward Concerns and ſee if thou be not *clothed with raggs* Prov. 23. 21. Do not plow by reaſon of ſ Cold, refuſe to ſow becauſe of the Wind, and to Reap from regard to the Clouds, or to goe to Sea for fear of a Storm and try what will come of it. If triſleing excuſes ſhall keep men from the Houſe of God while they can run all Hazzards for accompliſhing their worldly Deſigns, think what God now *does* and an enlightned Conſcience one day *will* judge of ſuch a Frame.

Others (if they would ſpeak it out, which for ſhame they dare not in words, tho' their practice ſpeaks it loud enough) love vain Company, Drinking, Gameing, &c. better than a Sermon. Alas for the Atheiſtical blindneſs and bruitiſh Senſuality that appears in ſuch an Humour! Is any Company better than that of God Father Son and Spirit? is any Fellowſhip in the world like the Communion of Saints? Any drink like the wine and milk and Water of Life that is here freely offered to thee? Is there any *Game* ſo pleaſing and profitable as that *Work* whereby thou mayſt win Chriſt? Is there not more refreſhment and Sweetneſs in a Sermon than in a Napp? Propound theſe and ſuch like Queſtions ſeriouſly to thy ſelf, and then ſee if thine own Conſcience will not be thy Reprover and Judge.

Some

Some plead Buſineſs, Farmes and Merchandize, they have many things to doe and cannot tend to hear the Word of God. We have ſpoken ſomething to this Objection already, and therefore ſhall paſs it briefly now. Only conſider, If a King or chief Ruler ſhould come to our Town, and ſend for us immediatly to come before him, & we ſhould ſend him word we could not tend to come, think how he would take it; eſpecially if he aſſured us that he came out of great kindneſs & reſpect to us and that he had great preferment & gifts to beſtow upon us, that he ſent for us out of good will, and that our waiting upon him ſhould be unſpeakably to our advantage, how ſhould we befool our ſelves for loſing ſuch an opportunity! Why ſo it is, and infinitly more than ſo. It would be dreadful if it ſhould be any man's lott under the Goſpel to be damned becauſe he could not tend to be ſaved, and yet undoubtedly it will be the caſe of many who will everlaſtingly periſh becauſe they could not ſpare the Time from their ſecular affairs and ſenſual pleaſures *to work out their own Salvation* by induſtrious applying themſelves to the Uſe of all means that God has appointed for the ſame. The promiſe in the Text of the getting the good of a Thouſand dayes in one does fully anſwer the Objection, and leave no room for an excuſe.

If

If a man that were gathering of chips or picking up ſtraws ſhould ſay he were ſo buſie that he could not afford the Time to come and receive his loading of Gold and Jewels which he might have for the fetching, we ſhould ſay of him he were *penny wiſe and pound fooliſh*. If you do not believe the Word of God is better than Thouſands of Silver and Gold, what doe you with your Bibles? why do you hear and read ſuch Books, that ye account full of Fables and Untruths? If they be true why do you not act accordingly? you muſt deny the Scriptures or you muſt value and attend upon the Word preached.

You ſay you would come but your worldly buſineſs will not ſuffer you; it ſeems then that if you had a proſpect of worldly Profit before you, you would put in for a ſhare. And I verily believe that if every perſon in Town might be well aſſured of receiving Ten or Twenty ſhillings a day that comes to Lecture, and were preſent before it began, continued till all the Service were over, and kept wakeing all the Time too, the money to be paid him as ſoon as he went out of the door, we ſhould have our Houſes crammed and Seats crouded, every vacant corner filled, you ſhould ſcarce find a man

in

in the ſtreets, nor Taverns, nor private houſes, nor would men have their Children or ſervants to play or work at home, if there were ſuch Gain to be gotten in two houres time here. Now what a low, earthly ſpirit doth this diſcover, and how unkindly muſt Chriſt needs take it to have his Houſe and Ordinances thus baſely undervalued! ſhould not men's Greedineſs of worldly Gain and Intenſeneſs thereabout convince them of this Duty?

You open your Shops every day, you *riſe in the morning* (or ſhould do *Pſal.* 104. 22, 23.) *and go to your labour until the evening*; you go to *'Change* every day, and obſerve your hours there to meet and confer about your Occaſions, to enquire Newes, diſcourſe of Affairs and diſpatch Buſineſs, and ſurely your Buſineſs for Heaven deſerves as much Time and Thoughtfulneſs.

And it heightens the matter of Reproof when men will not only not come to a Sermon, but ſit in their ſhops (perhaps in a worſe place) and that in view of the place of Worſhip, will be walking the ſtreets, and driving their Teams to and fro juſt by the Meeting-houſe ſide, and that in the ſight of the Congregation that are aſſembled to worſhip God, to the great diſhonour of God and Grief of tender

Con-

Consciences: surely it is not a Thing comely nor of good Report, (and such things we ought to follow *Phil.* 4. 8.) This casts a Reflection upon our Worship in the sight of the Heathen among whom we dwell, it puts a very low esteem upon it, and is matter of Scandal unto the prophane & carnal ones, who are hardned in their evil way and confirmed in their Atheistical Opinions about God and his Worship, when they see us who profess higher to carry it with such unseemliness and disrespect toward the same.

If there were *no open vision* among us the Word would be *more precious* as it was with them 1. *Sam.* 3. 1. If the Enemy were between us and the water (yea and bread too) of Bethlehem we should *long* more for it, and take more pains after it. But the Word is *commonly* preached and so *lightly* esteemed, *easie to be had* and therefore *low*-prized. So was the Manna (tho' Angels food) when rained about the Camp *every* day, and called *light Manna*. The Lord grant that our making so light of it may not provoke Him to send a Famine of Hearing the Word among us *Amos* 8. 11.

Obj. I know what some will object here Viz. that *I lay more stress upon Lectures than is due, and urge the Attending them with more strictness than is necessary, are they not to attend their par-*

ticular

particular Callings diligently and laboriously? do they not ſerve God there as well as in their General Calling? what, may they not upon any account miſs a Lecture &c.

Anſw. Do I ſay more than my Text ſaith? *One day is better than a Thouſand*, and is not Time beſt ſpent where there is ſuch odds in point of profit? will not Prudence direct every man to doe the beſt he can for his own beſt Advantage? I know there may be juſt reaſon to abſent from a Lecture, as the Caſe may *be*, and would not therefore make that abſolutely neceſſary which God hath not made ſo. All that I would is that men beware they deal not deceitfully with God nor fallaciouſly with themſelves by alledging that for a Cauſe which is not ſo, and will not paſs with *God* for a Cauſe *now*, nor with *their own Conſcience* when it comes to be *anſwered*. Let all men in theſe matters ſo deal as becomes thoſe that make the Knowledge of God in Chriſt their *Life eternal*, Communion and Fellowſhip with Him in all the wayes of his appointment their *Happineſs*, that have ſubordinated all other things to his *Glory*, and made Dwelling in his Houſe their *One thing*: and ſo as they may practically demonſtrate that they do unfeignedly believe and realize the Truth of this Text.

Let them ſee that under any pretenſe whatſoever they do not gratifie a profane, Atheiſtical, ſenſual

ſenſual or covetous ſpirit in themſelves, not juſtly grieve the good Spirit of God in themſelves or others. Be ſure that the Houſe of God and the Concerns thereof have in our Hearts (and let it alſo be manifeſt in our Actions) a deſerved precedence before our own houſes and the Affairs thereof. So live, ſo act as that it may be evident that God's Worſhip has the preeminence with us. Keep up the Honour of his Houſe by longing and panting for it, and rejoycing in heart when it ſhall be ſaid to us *Come let us goe up thither.*

Do but ſhew ſuch an Affection *to* and Delight in God's Houſe as God's people have been all along Characteriſed by, and our Souls good and Edification may be promoted by, and that is the ſumme of what is intended by this Diſcourſe, and with any thing leſſe than this we ſhall not be able to approve our ſelves to the Heart-ſearching God that we do truly, cordially *love the habitation of his Houſe and the place where his Honour dwells Pſal. 26. 8.*

Further, here alſo are to be reproved thoſe that if they do come, they come with their bodies only without their Hearts, let their Hearts run after their Covetouſneſs while with their Bodies they ſit like God's people: Such doe the Work of the *Lord* deceitfully and *their own* unprofitably.

Such

Such heartleſs (however they may ſeem ſpecious) Services will not excuſe them from that Denunciation and Curſe of *Deceivers* *Mal.* 1. 14. who *have a Male in the Flock, but ſacrifice a corrupt thing*. The Excellent things that are there deſervedly call for all the Soul, Heart, Mind and might to be imployed thereabout, and the contrary is very fooliſh and unworthy.

Again, *If one day in the Houſe of God be worth a Thouſand* they may not paſs without Reprehenſion who for want of Care and Heed loſe any part of this precious Time by *coming late*, after that ſo profitable Worſhip of God is begun. Did men indeed beleeve and conſider that there is ſo much good to be gotten, the Conſideration of the profit ſhould make every one ſtrive to be foremoſt, to be at the beginning of ſo good an Exercife. *We are all here preſent before God* well became thoſe Hearers *Act.* 10. 33. and they got well by their ready Attendance, the *Holy Ghoſt fell on all them that heard the Word* ver. 44. To be *watching and waiting at Wiſdom's gates and poſts* has a Bleſſing promiſed *Pro.* 8. 34. Not to be at the beginning of a Sermon is a great diſadvantage to him that makes Information and Edification his Buſineſs: And to be abſent from the Prayer before the Sermon is to miſs an Ordinance that fits us for Hearing; and by which the Word

Word heard comes to be *ſanctified* to us. If the Whole be ſo good, he *conſults ill* for himſelf that loſes any part of it.

Again, *Sleeping at a Sermon* is hereby condemned, the worth of a Day or an Hour in God's Houſe affords matter of ſharp Reproof to them that can ſleep away any part of it. *What can you not watch with* Chriſt *one hour*? Men do not uſe to ſleep when they are receiving mony. A man that is ſtanding before the Judge while the Sentence of Abſolution or Condemnation is pronouncing will certainly keep his eyes open; why, of no leſs importance is our being at a Sermon, where we are before God the Judge of all, and hearing thoſe words by which we ſhall be judged at the Laſt day. How they can be ſaid to *take heed how they hear* who hear themſelves aſleep, would be good for them to conſider when they are awake, and might help to keep them ſo. They that ſleep out a Sermon will be like the barren Heath of the Wilderneſs *that does not ſee when good comes*. And it is to be feared that he has but little ſenſe of the Worth of that Ordinance or expectation of benefit by it that can allow himſelf in ſuch a Deportment under it; a due Eſteem of it, with ſuitable Expectation from it would teach him better. Sitting aſleep while *the words of eternal life* are diſpenſing is not *Sitting like God's people*. Men may be awake and yet little the

better, but they may conclude that what time was ſlept away was loſt Time. He that gazes or ſleeps away ſome few Sentences, may thereby incapacitate himſelf for underſtanding the whole Diſcourſe. However, poſſibly that word may then be a ſpeaking which would have ſuited thy caſe and reached thy Heart if thou hadſt been awake to hear it, and ſuch a word it may be thou ſhalt never have an opportuniy of hearing again. You have or may have in your hands * an awakning Diſcourſe of God's exemplary Juſtice upon ſleeping *Eutichus*. God may doe ſo by thee, when he finds thee in a deep ſleep at a Sermon, he may make it a dead-ſleep to thee, and may ſufficiently vindicate himſelf by rendring that Reaſon *I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.* Levit. 10. 3. How that Word ſhould prove a *Savour of life* to thee which thou didſt ſleep at the hearing of I cannot imagine, and if not a Savour of life, whether it is not like to be *a Savour of death*, do thou conſider. Did you ever hear of a poor indigent perſon, that being ſent for by ſome great rich man to receive ſome bountiful, liberal Dole at his hands fell faſt aſleep while taking it? nò, the Hopes of a ſmall Alms will make a man watch and look.

* *Mr.* Mather's *Sermon upon Act.* 20. 9.

Again

Again those that are quite tired if the Sermon exceed somewhat the usual length, and inwardly think if they do not openly say *what a weariness is it!* Such do not carry as if they believed and realized this Text.

If you were brought to an heap of Gold and licensed for an hours time to tell it over, and were to have for your own as much as you could tell, you would not think the Glass too long, nor account your selves wronged if permitted to take part of another Glass, nay a whole one; is not God's word better than Thousands of silver and Gold? Can you sit hour after hour in vain Company drinking and telling stories and never think the time long, and is a Sermon too long for you? I remember a Solemn Word once delivered by that great man of God, now with God, Mr. *Richard Mather*, *You* (said he) *that think the Time long at a Sermon, will think the Time long in Hell.*

And hence it is *viz.* because men are weary, they cannot stay till Sermon be ended, or at least with-draw before the prayer after Sermon, and the Blessing in the close of all. Does this become those that think one day in God's House worth a Thousand? Is Christ speaking to you, and have you not the patience to hear him out? Has Christ procured a liberty for us to come before God and say *all* that we

have to say (which is the import of the Greek word *Heb.* 4. 16.) and shall we reckon it enough to hear *part* of what he has to say? Beware that because he speaks and we regard not, he do not retaliate to us accordingly, that we should speak and call and cry, and he not regard or hear us. Remember the forementioned Example *Act.* 10. *Cornelius and* his Company were not only got together and waiting for the coming of *Peter* ver. 24. But they lookt at themselves as Assembled before God, and their Business was to hear *all* that the Lord had commanded to be spoken.

It is a great slight put upon a Friend that out of compassion to us, seeing us in a dangerous condition has studied a way for our Relief, and is very seriously discoursing us thereabout, and we tell him he must cut short or else we must be gone, and in the Issue go away before he has done. If a man should be telling a tale of more than an hour long, especially if there be any thing of Wit and pleasure in it, you cann't chuse but hear out his story; and if a by-stander should add a parallel as much longer many persons would hardly get away till he were gotten to the further end of it. Does not a Discourse of God and Christ and thy great Salvation, deserve the best of thy Attention?

Or if men make a shift (and an hard shift

ſe is through their uneaſineſs and wearineſs) to ſtay till the Sermon be ended, then what tumbling out of the Meeting-houſe, as if it had been a Priſon to them, and they were glad of a *Goal-delivery!* what clattering and noiſe, to the great diſturbance of thoſe that fain would but by your meanes cannot joyn in the remaining Exerciſe!

To ſuch let me ſay, What have you no need of a prayer after Sermon that God would write in your hearts what hath been ſounding in your ears? Does not God deſerve to be acknowledged and praiſed for the liberty of a Sermon, and do not your ſouls need a prayer to him that alone is able to teach you to profit, that his labour in ſpeaking and yours in hearing may not be in vain? And in ſpecial how dare you turn your backs upon the Bleſſing, has the Lord appointed & Authorized his Miniſters to bleſs you in his Name, and are you in ſo much haſt that you cannot ſtay to hear it and ſhare in it? Beware leſt God ſay of you (as of him *Pſal.* 109. 17.) becauſe you delighted not in Bleſſing, ſo let it be far from you. Why the good of all you have done depends upon a Bleſſing, and can you be content to goe away without that?

See what a great Thing the Lord makes of the Prieſt's pronouncing a Bleſſing *Levit.* 26. 22. to 28. *On this wiſe ſhall you bleſs the Chil-*

Children of Iſrael ſaying &c. and after the Bleſſing adds, *They ſhall put my Name upon them and I will bleſs them.* Note alſo how Solomon in that great Solemnity 1. *King* 8. and after prayer *ſtood and bleſt --- the Congregation*, and it's ſaid he bleſſed *all* the Congregation, then they did not croud out as ſoon as the prayer was ended, but they *all* ſtayed to hear and partake in the ſame, and it was worth their labour. To be commended to the Grace, Love and Fellowſhip of God Father Son and Spirit is certainly worth the ſtaying for, and that minute while you are waiting for and receiving the Bleſſing will bring them a Thouſand times more profit than thoſe that ſlight and neglect the bleſſing uſually get the while.

Let me further ask ſuch perſons

What come you to the Houſe of God for? what was your Errand thither? and have you got that you came for, that makes you with-draw before the Worſhip of God be finiſhed? Did you come to draw near to God, to ſee his *goings in the ſanctuary*, and to have Fellowſhip with him there: did you ſee and believe that one day in God's Houſe is worth a Thouſand, and have you found it ſo? why ſo weary then, why in ſuch Haſt to be gone? thoſe that have met with ſome Taſts would be for more, if the Beginning was ſweet you would

would have ſtayed to the latter end. He that comes for Chriſt to an Ordinance, whether he meet him or meet him not at his Entrance thereupon, he will ſtay by it; if he meet him, the ſweetneſs of the enjoyment will detain him, if he meet him not, the hopes that he may enjoy him will keep him waiting. If Chriſt appear to him in his glory, he will ſay it is good being here, if Chriſt as yet appear not, he will account it worth his Labour to continue his attendance in expectation that he may. The ſincere ſeeker cannot be ſatisfied without finding, the true finder will think he hath never found enough, and therefore will not goe away ſo long as there is any hope of finding more. He will ſay with himſelf, who can tell but the laſt word in the Sermon, the laſt clauſe in the prayer, or the Bleſſing in the cloſe of the whole may be intended by God as a ſpecial Bleſſing to mee? and accordingly during the whole time of the Duty will keep himſelf in the way of the Bleſſing.

Again if any ſhould come to Meeting only for a name, to get and keep a Reputation for Religion, truly if you think you have made your market and done your errand I doubt you will find your ſelves miſtaken; ſuch a diſorderly and unſeaſonable With-drawing will crack your Credit and leſſen your Eſteem among them

them that are serious and judicious.

They are to be Reproved who tho' they pretend to much Devotion, come to the House of God and *sit there like Gods people*, yet while they offer *the lame and the blind* unto God, reserving *the Male in the flock* for their better friends, discover their Insincerity unto the Heart-Searching God, who curses such deceivers (*Mal.* 1. 14.) however cunningly and fairly they may carry it before men. The Lord tells the Prophet *Ezekiel* Cap. 33. 31. what a sort of Hearers he had, who both look'd and sate, spoke and in their outward behavior carried it like his people, *but their Hearts went after their Covetousness*. Their Hearts were in their Houses, Fields, Shops, in close pursuit of their worldly Concerns under the Cloak of External Worship. God expects the Heart, if we give him not that, he reckons he hath nothing; if he has the Heart he can overlook many Infirmities and Defects, while the most specious Appearances and fairest Performances without the Heart, are but bodily exercise and Lip-labour, little profitable to themselves, but highly provoking unto God. Such Persons give God only the Skin for the Sacrifice, the lame, blind, seeming Services instead of the fat of heart-Obedience, and the Lord gives them as good as they bring, rewarding empty Profes-

ons

professions with as empty Expectations. They are deceived that think God will be mocked; he doth not only see men, but see into men and through them, and all those duties will be found too light for his acceptance that have not the heart going with them in the performance.

It was a pleasant sight *Luk.* 12. 1. to see the people crowding together to hear the Word of God, insomuch that they trod one upon another (and one would think it should be common among us where the people are so numerous, and the access to the Ordinances so easie) but yet even then it is observable that Christ began with a caution against Hypocrisie. [*Beware of Hypocrisie*] is a Text fit to be preach'd on before the most zealous and full Auditory. Look diligently that the snake of Hypocrisie lurk not, lye, not hid among the tallest and rankest herbs of a forward Profession. Worshiping of God and coming constantly to his House is like the Apothecaries Oyntment, very odoriferous and grateful, only the dead Fly of Hypocrisie will spoil the Savour of it, and make us to lose all that we have wrought thereabout.

USE 3. In the last place this Doctrine may be improved by way of Exhortation, and we are from hence excited unto these three Duties,

First

I. To Prize the House of God after the rate given in the Text.

II. That we thereupon carefully attend the same, and this will follow on the former.

III. That we so carry it towards and under those Ordinances as that we may find the Truth of this Text in our own Experience, which is the genuine fruit of our being sincere in the two foregoing duties.

1. Thus prize the Liberties and Priviledges of God's House, labour to believe that *One day in God's House is worth a Thousand*, in so doing thou wilt shew a *David*-like heart, an heart after God's own Heart. Indeed *David* was taught the *worth* by the *want* of God's House: the Lord grant we may learn at a cheaper rate, usually our Dullness puts him upon such kind of Discipline. We may well and safely take them at the price God has set them, they are not prized too high.

2. So prizing the House of God, attend it accordingly. Here is most profit to be had and therefore omit no season of being here, Wait dayly at Wisdom's posts. You may buy Gold too dear, but the Liberties of God's House you cannot buy to dear, their *fruit is better than Gold*, and their *Revenue than choice Silver*, *Prov.*

Pro. 8. 19. with 34. Tho' you should be at great pains and expence you will have a good Pennyworth.

Let not any Ordinary Business divert you from a Sermon. Make Conscience of taking every Opportunity to work while the Day lasts.

And here let me say, If *that* Business hinders you from a Sermon that would not hinder you from a Feast, a merry-meeting, from receiving mony, from spending an hour or two with a friend that had sent for you, or come to visit you, from making a good Bargain &c. I say if kept from a Sermon by those occasions which would not have kept you from *these*, you will not be able to answer it to God nor to your own Judgment and Consciences neither, when they come to be Serious and Considerate.

Then call upon one another, exhort and encourage one another, say *come let us goe to the House of God*, you that have ever tasted the sweet of God's Word, or been made joyful in his House of Prayer tell others what you have found, your Example and Council may be of use to draw others along with you, for which *they* will thank you, and *God* will reward you another day.

3. So attend upon God in his House as that your own Experience may testifie to the Truth

of this Text and Doctrine, *viz.* That One day here is worth a Thousand, that you may be able to say as we have heard, so have we seen in the House of God, we have heard that there is great profit and Gain there to be gotten, and we have found it so. Do not content your selves (as many do) that you have been there, but enquire what you have done and gotten there. To goe in a Round of Duties, Secret, Private, Publique without making any progress or getting any profit, is in it self irrational and unto God very provoking. You are going up to the House of God to spend a day before him there, now see that it prove a good day to you, that you may have the good of it to your selves, this ought to be every one's Care.

You would think your selves much to blame if being in extream Want you should come to a plentiful market where all manner of supplies are offered you freely, and you carry home nothing with you: And yet how often hath many an Hearer come into God's House and tarried till the Sermon was ended, but carried away not one penniworth of spiritual good, soul-benefit, and it may be not so much as afflicted or troubled to think on it.

How did the Spouse behave her self when her Beloved was with-drawn (*Cant.* 3. 1, to 5. she rises, goes about, seeks, enquires of the Watch

Watch-men, never rests till she had found him, and then held him fast and brought him home with her. 'Tis Finding Christ in his House that is the profit of our day's work, that renders Time so advantagiously spent, and therefore this should be sincerely aym'd at, and strenuously endeavoured by every one that comes thither. This was *Mary*'s Case *Joh.* 20. 1, ---- 16. she got up early and her business was not to see the Sepulchre where Jesus was laid, or the linnen Clothes and Napkins in which he was wrapt, but to see Jesus himself, *her Lord* was in her heart, and to see Him was her Errand, hence when others went away with no other sight than the Grave and linnen, she waits and weeps and looking into the Grave there sees Angels, unto whom she gives this reason of her weeping because her Lord was carried away, and turning about enquired of the supposed Gardener for her *Lord*, and being thus earnest and unsatisfied in her Enquiries at last she found him.

Thus should every one behave himself having realized to himself that the Ordinances of God's House are wayes of Communion with Christ and that *there* lies the good of them, he should make that his busines and be contented with nothing unless he attains his end: It should not satisfie him that he hath been at the place where Christ is wont to appear, and that he

he hath been at the place where Christ is wont to appear, and that he hath been under Ordinances in which Jesus Christ is wont to be conveied, but he must goe and wait with an heart fixt for Christ himself, and sadly bemoan himself under a disappointment there, and unto such the Lord will make good that word *Isa.* 45. 19. *I said not to the seed of Jacob seek ye my face in vain.*

In no Duties is the Word of God more solemn than about those of his House. See the dreadful charge to him that preaches 1. *Tim.* 6. 13. *I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickneth all things, and before Jesus Christ &c.* So again 2. *Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom, Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season &c.* In obedience to which Command are Lectures set up; and can you think that you which *hear* are not under a like Charge? Shall they that preach be so charged to preach & *so* preach as in the sight of him that will judge them for their preaching, and may you that are to hear think to scape the Judgement of God if you hear without Seriousness and Profit? Does not his *Strictness* with them that *preach*, more than intimate that he will also be *exact* with them that *hear*? If they must take heed to themselves and their Doctrine;

you

you must take heed to your selves and your Hearing. If they must speak so for matter, and manner, and end, as they that look to answer it at the great and dreadful Day; you must hear upon the like peril.

There is no serious preacher of the Gospel but goes with an aking heart about his work, and when he has preached is ready to condemn himself for fear lest he hath not so spoken as he ought to have spoken; and I believe that there is no serious Hearer but will see cause to ask himself, and have I so heard as I ought to have heard?

Let us pray for *David* spirit, Affection and Experience, of which there is but little now a dayes to be found.

Take a few Directions.

1. Be well acquainted with the Being, Nature, Worth, and Need of your souls.

Know that you have souls, how many live as if they had none? Consider also they are immortal Existences and must live for ever. Then aquaint your selves with their Needs, listen to their Cravings, and think of what a necessity they are in of a Supply.

Your souls are a Thousand times better than your bodies, and therefore Providing for them of a Thousand times more Concernment.

Oh, an immortal Soul, eternal Estate, and endless Life are momentous Considerations, and should be attended accordingly.

2. This being supposed, it will necessarily follow that you are indispensibly bound to attend all meanes that God has appointed for the Salvation of your Souls. Neglecting means for outward Subsistence, or bodily Maintenance will bring you to Penury; then neglecting meanes for your soul's maintenance will issue in Ruin and Misery.

3. Press on your souls the stamp of Divine Authority that is upon the Ordinances of his House. Here God will be found, & if you slight these wayes of his appointing, he will not be found elsewhere. And be assured that God will not deceive you. Here, he hath recorded his Name, and if you wait here, you wait under a Promise of a Blessing, and shall not wait for nothing.

Then come to the House of God out of Conscience, not out of Custom, nor for any by-Ends, and if you come conscientiously, you will come constantly, I mean as often as God gives you an opportunity.

To omit one Duty does but make way for our omitting another. Once give way to Hin-

drances

hinderances and you will never be without them, but they will come in upon you like a flood: Make but a Gap once, and you will scarce know how or when to stop it. And who can tel but *that* season which you lose might have been for your Everlasting Advantage? The diseased persons not knowing when the Angel would come down and move the waters, lay there alwayes waiting to prevent the loss of an opportunity; and so should we.

A pious soul if providentially detained from God's House growes the more hungry after it, the want of one meal sharpens his stomach and increases his Appetite for the next; but a carnal heart who out of sloth and slightiness neglects it, will grow every day more careless and unconcern'd than other, like a weak stomach, the more it fasts the more it may.

4. Get suitable preparations for such a Solemnity. When *Jacob* was commanded by God to goe to *Bethel* to worship, he advises his people to *put away the strange Gods, wash their garments and be clean* Gen. 35. 1, 2, 3. Every business of moment and importance bespeaks preparation. A Journy by land, a Voyage by sea, Entertainment of a great friend call for preparation; much more then when our work is to meet with and entertain the Lord of Glory at his House which is appointed for a place

of meeting with God *Exod.* 20. 23. Hence that charge *Eccl.* 5. 1. *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear &c.* When there we must be ready, then there must be some time taken to make ready, and that on penalty of *offering the sacrifices of fools.* He that has so great a work to do, and does not prepare for it, does egregiously play the fool. They that observe their own Hearts will find that they are not ordinarily so ready for so great a work of *drawing near to God* as they ought to be; then either we must prepare, or rush in without preparation, and what ill musick must that needs be in God's ear where the Instrument is out of tune? the danger of which we had better believe and prevent than experience.

6. Go thither with answerable Expectations. We fare no better in the House God because we expect no better. Aiming too low is the way to miss the mark. If after humble Preparation our hearts are big with Expectation the Lord will not suffer our Hopes to be abortive. *The expectation of the poor shall not perish* Psal. 9. 18. Such profit as you have heard of is to be had in God's House, believe it, prepare for it, carry your empty vessels, open your mouthes wide, expect to have them filled and they shall be filled. Look what you need and

God promiſes, and you ſhall not look in vain.

7. Let your attendance when there, be proportionable to your expectations in going thither. Serious Preparation and great Expectation will occaſion vigorous Attendance. To come with a ſence of great need to a place of full ſupply, with up-raiſed Expectations, will oblige a man to look diligently leſt he goe away without his Errand.

The ſervants of *Benhadad* (1. *King.* 20. 31, 32, 33.) ſaw what an ill caſe their maſter was in, & had heard that *Iſrael*'s Kings were merciful, this gave them encouragement, they prepared themſelves accordingly, in the capacity of humble, periſhing, ſelf-judging Suppliants, and in moſt ſubmiſſive Language preſented their Requeſt before *Ahab*, and then it's ſaid *they did diligently obſerve whether any thing would come from him, and did haſtily catch it*, and accordinly obtained their Deſire. Why know that we have far greater encouragement to wait upon God in his Houſe, we have an Invitation which they had not, we have a Promiſe to goe upon, whereas they went at a *Peradventure*, upon an *it may be* only: Our neceſſities alſo are greater viz. not for the ſaveing of our bodily lives, but for preſervation of the lives of our immortal Souls, that ſhould be ten Thouſand times more dear to us; then

let us prepare thoroughly, come expectingly; and then attend diligently, and catch up every word greedily, withal waiting for the breathing of the Spirit in an Ordinance, and we shall find that the King of Heaven is far more gracious and bountiful than the Kings of *Israel* were merciful.

8. Beware how you ſpend your Time afterward. When men have been warmed in an Ordinance they had need ſee that they do not catch cold. Watching *after* Hearing is as needful as Watching *unto* Hearing. It's noted of the Thorny Hearers *Luk.* 8. 14. that *when they have heard they go forth, and are choakt with cares and riches and pleaſures*. Many a precious Sermon is thus loſt. As they are like to get but little good by coming to the Houſe of God who come reaking out of their worldly occaſions without any præ-conſideration or preparation; ſo they are like to loſe or leſſen what they have got who ruſh into the world again without after-conſideration *of* or meditation *on* what they have mett with. The *World* was ever a great Enemy to the *Word*. Communing with our own Hearts and Diſcourſing one with another about what we have heard and ſeen in God's Houſe, will notably promote our proficiency under the ſame.

When the Lord ſpake ſo loud to *Pharaoh* in that

that dreadful Judgment of the turning the Water into Bloud, it is ſaid, *Exod.* 7. 23. that *he turned and went into the houſe*, and ſo it never went to his Heart. Had he not turned away his eyes *from*, but kept them fixed *on* that ſolemn object, it might have reached his Heart. And thus often it proves; many a word, many a Conviction, many a good Beginning is loſt in the Houſe. From God's Houſe men turn into their own, and *there* in the Buſineſs of the Houſe, in the Cares and Pleaſures of the Houſe, in the Company of the Houſe, in the various Diverſions that they meet with there and elſewhere, all is loſt as tho' it had never been.

By way of motive take

A few Conſiderations.

1. Conſider whether thy own Judgement and Conſcience be not convicted of the Truth of this Doctrine. Doth not Conſcience proclaim aloud (or at leaſt ſecretly whiſper in thine ears) that all this is is true? Is not God better than the world, and Communion with him than any worldly Gain? And then is it not better for thee to lock up thy doores, ſhutt up thy ſhop, and goe to the Houſe of God in the ſeaſon of it, yea and carry thy people

with thee too, and if they gain thou wilt gain too, if they gain not thou ſhalt not loſe becauſe thou haſt done thy Duty. Now if thou art convinced, think how it will look in an evil day, to have gone on in the neglect of a duty of which thou haſt been convinced, eſpecially ſo profitable a duty as this. Thou mayſt poſſibly ſilence Conſcience for a while, but canſt not alwaies, it will one day cry like a travailing woman, and all the worldly Gain thou haſt gotten the while will not ſtop the mouth of it.

2. Know that God will call us to a Reckoning for all the Opportunities that we have had, and for all that we might have had, whether we took them or no. You ſhall be accountable not only for all the ſermons you *have* heard, but alſo for all thoſe that you *might* have heard, and nothing but a carnal, careleſs, vain, earthly Heart kept you from. Eſpecially you that have been idleing, ſitting ſtill, drinking, gameing &c. the while; God will aſſuredly ſet you down in his Book Debitors for ſuch a Sermon, & he will be ſure to reckon with you when the books come to be opened. Here is the Proviſion made, the Table furniſhed, your ſelves invited, your Trencher laid, your portion carved out for you, and you muſt pay whether you eat or no; and is it not then beſt to attend and take your ſhare in the Gain, ſeeing

you

you must bear your part of the Loss?

3. Contempt of God's House and the precious Ordinances of the same will be very grievous and offensive unto God, and such neglect will be called Contempt.

For God to set up his House among us, and be at the charge of continuing to us the Ordinances of the same, and yet for us to despise and under value them will be highly provokeing. Indeed it is a sin that has all other sins in it, or attending on it. No duty is well done if this be omitted: You cannot rightly serve God in your *own* Houses if you do not while and when you may, attend Him in *his*.

4. By this sin we provoke the Lord to shut up the doores of his House among us, to pluck up stakes and be gone from the midst of us, If you refuse to hear, God may justly refuse to speak. *Ezekiel* shall be made dumb to a rebellious people.

Let us be awakened, God is threatening to break up House among us, and if ever he so does, our undervaluing of his House will be the cause of it. That *Nail* in God's House which hath been hitherto left us seems to be shaken and loosened, the Lord looks as if he were departing from us, there be many awful

Symptom

Symptoms of his Departure, and *woe unto us if he depart from us Hos.* 9, 12.

Our Father's Love to the House of God above their own houses and all outward Concerns, Occasioned the bringing of his Tabernacle into this Wilderness; see that the coldness of our Affection thereto does not prevail with him to remove it again. There is a beginning made among us already, *Judgment is begun at the House of God*, let us take warning and receive Instruction. the master of the House is risen from his place, and hath begun to shut the door, and if men either care not to come in, or venture to come carelesly in, he will shutt it quite.

New-England's Name and Glory has been *Jehovah-Shammah* [the Lord is there] His House and Ordinance *in* a place give that name *to* a place. But what if he should take away the Vineyard from us for our want of rendering him the fruit of it? Why then call them *Ichabod*, for the Glory is departed from Israel. The Glory of the Lord seems to be standing at the Threshold of the door. To look upon God and see him *going*, upon Ordinances and see them *going* is a most awful sight, for when they go the true glory of a place goes, nor will our other good things stay behind, as woful experience does abundantly testifie. If we come to lose God's House and the glorious privi-

ledges

Priviledges of the ſame we ſhall be the [illegible] miſerable people under Heaven: As none have been ſo priviledged, ſo none will be ſo miſerable as our ſelves.

It ſorely aggravated *Jeruſalem's* miſery in the day of her Affliction *Lam.* 1. 7. that the Enemy mockt at her Sabbaths, and for our making a mock of Sabbaths (which we do while we make a light matter of them, under-value & get no good by them) God may juſtly leave the *Adverſary* to mock at our Sabbaths. Surely the Lord hath been long threatening, but now he is in the way of Execution it's high time for us to awake, and awaken one another.

And if it will be ſo *bitter to remember the good* things of God's houſe when they be *loſt*, is it not better to conſider them, love, prize, and improve them while they are *preſent*? which they that do rightly ſhall never have that Occaſion to remember them when they are gone.

God doth not eaſily give up, or depart from a people that he hath once viſibly and ſignally owned, no altho' he may obſerve a great deal of ſin and backſliding among them. *Hoſ.* 11. 8, 9. Where he has once built his Houſe God delights to dwell, and is not for removing till there be no other remedy 2. *Chron.* 36. 15, 16, 17. But if they either Idolize the Houſe of God, (as Iſrael did the Ark 1. *Sam.* 4.) and

grow

secure and wanton by reason of it, as they did *Jer.* 7. 8, ------ 12. or do not prize it as they ought, nor make such Returns as may be expected, but contrariwise profane and pollute it; Then *Goe to my place at Shilo* and see what I did to them, and so will I doe to you.

To be deeply humbled *for*, and hasten to the bloud of sprinkling for pardon and cleansing *of* these provoking Evils that have been and are among us, and to get an up-raised Esteem *of* & Affection *to* the House of God is the only way in which we may hopefully and comfortably meet the Lord while he is yet in the way.

To conlude ---

If one day in God's House here upon Earth be so much worth, what is a day, yea the *DAYES* of *ETERNITY* worth in that upper House, that Presence-Chamber, & Father's House, where the Lord will exhibit all his Glory *before* and solace himself *with* his Children for ever! Think what a sweet time that will be. If *now and then* a Glimpse of his Glory be so rakeing and ravishing, what will near, intimate, familiar, uninterrupted & endless Fellowship with Father and Son be! If they be blest that may dwell in *this* House, and should still praise him for the same, how will they be blest that shall for ever dwell in *that* House? and what soul-delighting Hallelujahs will be everlastingly sung by those to whom the Lines shall fall in that pleasant place, when they shall be

be possess'd of that goodly Heritage! [illegible] where we now are is but the Gate of He[illegible] the Porch, the Courts belonging to that Hou[illegible] of Glory, what then is the inmost Room, t[illegible] Holy of Holies! If a day in these Courts b[illegible] worth a Thousand, how many Thousand ye[illegible] Millions of dayes and years is a day, an hou[illegible] *there* worth! If this place be so beautifull a[illegible] Admirable, oh how Amiable is *that* Dwellin[illegible] place! Surely it is good dwelling there. [illegible] obscurer Glimpses of God's Glory in his H[illegible] be so precious and pleasant, what will the [illegible] holding of him face to face be, and that [illegible] ver and forever too!

Oh then prize this House as the Gate [illegible] that, and as the way that leads us thither, a[illegible] attend upon God therein accordingly, until [illegible] can experience the Truth of what *David* h[illegible] expresses. And be we well assured that G[illegible] will sooner or later give every sincere At-Attender on him here just cause to set his hand and Seal to this great Truth *One day in thy House is better than a* THOUSAND.

FINI[illegible]

Books printed for, and Sold by *Joseph Br[illegible]* at his Shop at the Corner of the *Prison-Lane* next the *Exchange*.

A Discourse concerning *Comets*, wherein the Nature of *Blazing Stars* is enquired into, by Mr. *Increase Mather*.

-------An *Essay* for the Recording *Illustrious Providences*.

---- The *Doctrine* of Divine *Providences* opened and Applied. To which is Annexed

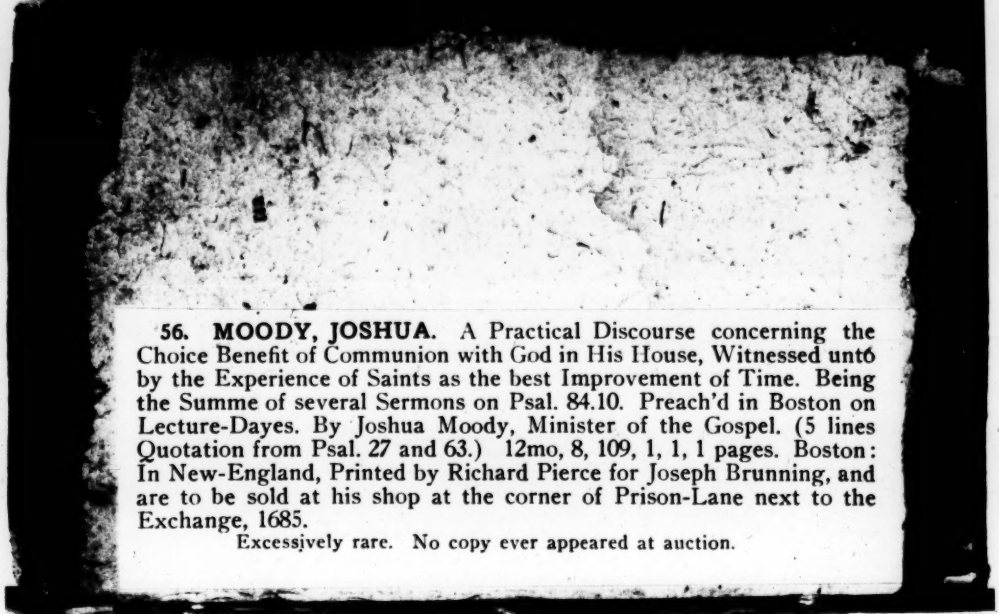
A Sermon wherein is shewed That it is the *Duty* and should be the *Care* of *Believers* on Christ to live in the constant Exercise of *Grace*. by Mr. *Nathanael Mather*, Minister of the Gospel at *Dublin* in *Ireland*.

Self-Employment in Secret, containing Evidences upon *Self-examination*, Thoughts upon *Painful Afflictions*, Memorials for *Practice*. by Mr. *John Corbet*.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THere is intended for the Press a *Discourse* Concerning the Person, Offices, and Glory of Jesus Christ; being Sacramental Meditations on Christ's [illegible] by the Reverend [illegible] *Increase Mather*.

Elizabeth
Richardson
Book
1807



56. **MOODY, JOSHUA.** A Practical Discourse concerning the Choice Benefit of Communion with God in His House, Witnessed unto by the Experience of Saints as the best Improvement of Time. Being the Summe of several Sermons on Psal. 84.10. Preach'd in Boston on Lecture-Dayes. By Joshua Moody, Minister of the Gospel. (5 lines Quotation from Psal. 27 and 63.) 12mo, 8, 109, 1, 1, 1 pages. Boston: In New-England, Printed by Richard Pierce for Joseph Brunning, and are to be sold at his shop at the corner of Prison-Lane next to the Exchange, 1685.

Excessively rare. No copy ever appeared at auction.